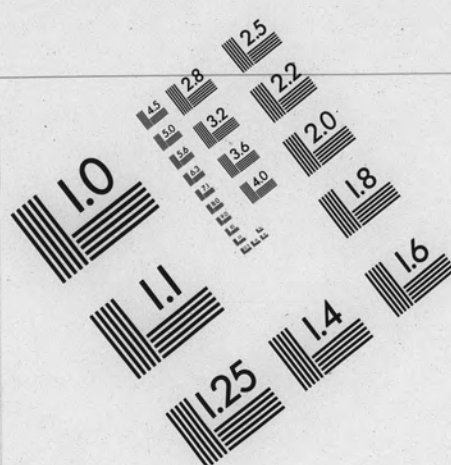


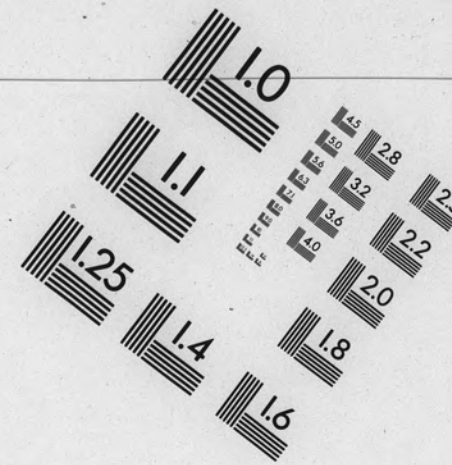
Journal, 1948.



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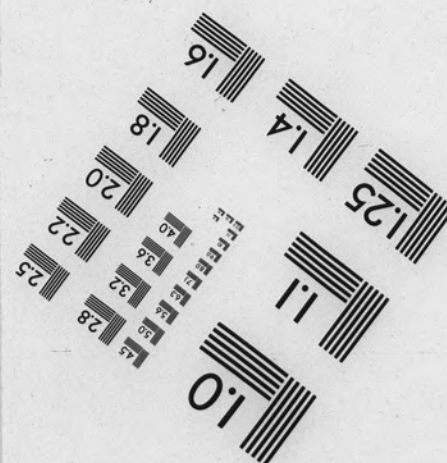
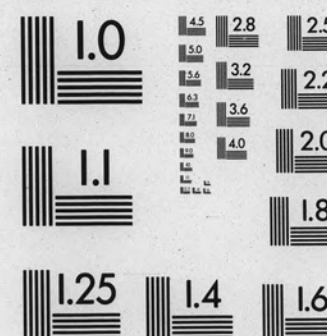
1100 Wayne Avenue, Suite 1100
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
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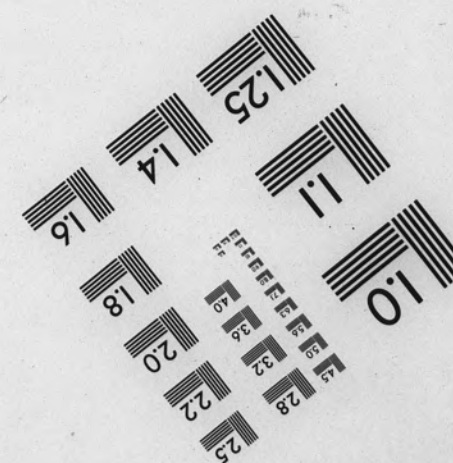
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J. Bachelier 1/31/47

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Ch. Buckels
St. Martin.

January 1st, 1948.

Memorandum:

How nice to begin the New Year right by receiving your elegant air mail in today's post.

I think I need scarcely tell you how sincerely I hope 1948 will turn out in many a way just as you would have it.

In getting things to going right, perhaps we might as well start with the weather, which your letter indicates was much too opulent in the snow section, and which tonight's radio indicates has been improved upon by a torrent of rain that has turned into sleet and ice. Surely the big old angel food cake was exciting enough without this additional touch of frosting. And what a pity that the original visitation from on high had to scramble your program to the extent it did. Let's all "hold the thought" that a bigger and better thaw may rapidly set transportation services to rights again.

I'm so glad to know that you like the champagne buckets. I once thought a story, written from the view point of a mirror, detailing an account of the various people whose faces were reflected in it, might be interesting. When I contemplate the three ladies for whom these buckets were intended, and how their journeys carried them into such distinctly different localities, it seems to me their history sometime might well be worth recording.

How nice of you to tell me about St. Martin, and how much like you, that you should have sought out particulars so directly. If this little statuette tends to symbolize the little details of Cane River darkie doings, then perhaps an occasional glance will hold something in addition to what the casual, - and untutored, - passer-by may catch at a single glimpse.

The the enclosure, you will note that I am

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to have a guest on the 12th or 13th. Although the chinopins, mentioned in the letter, came from a totally different section of the state, they chanced to arrive in today's post along with this letter. By some error, three trees were included in the shipment, rather than two. Accordingly I planted the Madam's for her, and set out the other two at Arenbourg, in Unit No. 1. Some varieties of the chinopin grow as large as live oaks in this section of Louisiana, they say, although I know not which tree is likely to win in a maturity contest. There is a live oak growing not far from one of the trees I planted this afternoon, and at the end of a year or two, we shall see which variety is growing faster, and so we can leave the most likely one, transplanting the slower to another spot in the same Unit, which, you may recall, has need of shade trees.

Two negroes were waiting for me on my gallery tonight when I returned from the big house. They said they had come to see me because they had had such a nice time at Dee-dee Boy's last Friday night, listenin' to the talk. Frankly I had no idea that either of them were there, in fact I would have found it difficult to identify more than two or three people in the big fire-lit room, for the blazing fireplace cast delightful but strange surraces upon the faces of everyone forming the semi-circle about the room, and perhaps the uncertainty of the identity of each individual added a measure of weird charm to the gathering. For one thing, it kept one mentally on one's toes when hilarious personalities crept into the conversation, for naturally one would be careful to avoid mentioning aspects of life that might bear down too heavily on someone present of whose identity I knew not. There are two subjects which always tickle the negroes, - the inexplicable and totally outlandish doings of members of their own race, - and anything about animals, - particularly local ones with which they are familiar. I have had so many contacts with opossums, for example - I can always drag out the same old "chestnuts", and they never seem to tire hearing them over again. Naturally I was glad to see these unknown friends, and so how it added a second seal of pleasure to this first day of the New Year, - to set pleasantly the tone which had sounded with the arrival of your nice nice letter.....

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January 2nd, 1948.

Memorandum:

Our weather continues all blue and gold, and thus reminds me constantly of New York's need for a piece from the same pattern.

Isn't it remarkable how comparatively safe people are from the killing effects of snow and ice when they live slap on the top of a glacier, thousands of miles from Manhattan whereas people living in the midst of one of the world's greatest urban centers are exposed to unimaginable risks to life and limb by a single mighty snowfall.

I can't say that it is precisely like Spring in these parts, and yet an urge to range all over the place on the part of the canine populations somehow suggests the advent of balmy weather. Perhaps the dogs have merely caught the holiday spirit from human beings, for on the plantation, Christmas means a cessation of anything approximating normal routine. A couple of days ago Peter was operating a tractor on Little River, and on his return, told me he had seen Dora and Charlie, the dachhund, way back yonder. I don't suppose three or four miles is much for comparatively long-legged Dora, but Little River and back must seem like encircling the globe to little old short-legged Charlie. Already the negroes are back on the job, and will not "bust out" into a frolic until the 19th of June. After a week or ten days of rambling, the airdale will resume her or his accustomed want to spend each night on my doorstep, and so be ready with the dawn to mark up the road to Arenbourg with me.

I have just finished re-reading The Cathedral, liking it as much as ever. I am currently engaged in going over Charles Darwin's Origin of the Species, not for pleasure but for instruction, needing to refresh my mind on several points he covered, in order to parallel them the better with similar theories enunciated by Dr. Monette of Natchez some quarter of a century earlier.

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The local radio programs are pretty dull these days, what with State and local politicians buying up time to further their aspirations for office, - election day scheduled for January 20th. On nights when static is bad making it difficult to receive remote stations clearly, I do a heap of fiddling about with the kilocycles to discover some news or entertainment outside the gamut of hill-billy chortling. Last night I stumbled on to Station X E G, San Antonio, - a dual type of broadcasting that alternates between Texas and Mexico. They are forever advertising flim-flam stuff, - the advertising emanating from South of the border, and thus circumventing Federal laws governing such questionable practices. I frequently find myself greatly entertained by sustaining time on X E G, for they have the

craziest type of Bible-slappers that dish out the most impassioned religion you ever heard. I chanced to tune in on one preacher, - a self styled Baptist, I think, who had two preachers and a business man visiting a Church conference in San Antonio, - the three men being from South Africa. Each one testified as to the wonders of religion, and went on to explain that they busied themselves in South Africa by holding street meetings, "kneeling down with women in the streets, weeping with them, wailing with them, and coming to Love Jesus with them". You can imagine the type of fanatic, but you can scarcely picture the excitement when some worthy brother on the platform suddenly broke in to demand if the ladies with whom they knelt were black. Of all the uproar that followed, nothing like it had ever come over the air before. All three residents of the Capetown area began disclaiming any interest in colored people, assuring the audience they would have nothing to do with such people since God intended them to save the soul of white people "like ourselves" only. I am sorry you and Mr. Pipes couldn't have been tuned in on the same program, for it was wonderfully hilarious, host and guests all at the same time frantically trying to assure their listeners that God's exclusive wish was to concern Himself with the souls of white people and that colored people's souls, - if any, - were no concern of Him or His representatives. I laughed 'til the tears ran down my cheeks, greatly elated withal to attend the verbal mess that inadvertently had come so perilously close to wrecking their standing with every hill-billy sympathizer who might be tuned in.

Bob Hope and Fred Allen had better be looking to their laurels, for a couple more X E G broadcasts of this persuasion and Standard Brand and Pepsodent would be giving a thought to the Bible slappers.....

2757

January 4th, 1948.

Memorandum:

How nice to have your letter in Saturday's post.

Poor you, what with all the snow piled up on top of you, plus all the business and domestic demands added to the elements. Please don't try to write until things get melted down a little. You know I will always understand.

I sincerely appreciate your excellent account of the heraldic figures appearing on the champagne coolers. Vaguely the salient features seem to re-echo in my mind, and perhaps I shall stumble upon the exact identity at some unexpected moment. I used to have quite an interesting book about a foot square, - full page illustrations, - that was issued by someone in the 18th century as a kind of beautifully hand worked supplement to the Almanac de Gotha, wherein almost everyone's coat of arms was spread individually to each page, - slap to the margin, and I may run across the volume itself at some future year, - or my memory may turn over a few pages so as to bring your descriptive account back to my vision, for I once knew the big old thing almost by heart. I'll surely let you know if the thought does recur.

I have no doubt you have seen the latest issue of Life. I snatched at it eagerly to get my first peepshots of the New York snow scenes. But as these didn't cover many pages, I soon found myself thoroughly enchanted at the full page reproductions from the Duc de Berri's Book Of The Hours. Isn't the issue interesting and don't you find the illustrations delightful. How much they put in mind of some of those by Memling or some such artist which Insel produced ever so long back. You may recall that in the 1930's I was trying to persuade the French Government to send over some

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of the treasures from the Bibliotheque Nationale, to show them throughout the United States, - after the manner of today's Freedom Train, which, by the way, comes to Shreveport on January 17th with its precious cargo of the Declaration of Independence, etc., etc. I, of course, wanted the Book of the Hours among the treasures in the exhibit, most of whose treasures would come from the Bibliotheque, although I think the Book of the Hours comes from the Chateau of Chantilly of the Prince of Conde. It goes without saying that I also wanted the only existing original water colors, done by order of Marie Antoinette, of the Hameau & Petit Trianon, which she sent to her sister, the Duchess of Modena, to name but a single other item. But nothing ever came of all that, - and I continue to wonder why illustration, sometime between 1900 and 1939 never reproduced these wonderful creations for the Duc de Berri in one of its Noel numbers.

We have had a quiet week end in these parts, with few visitors and wonderful weather, which remains too warm for one to wear a coat.

Aunt Lottie and Miss Ette were down from town today and they report that their next door neighbors, the McCooks, are not back from New York as yet. I wonder if they are stuck in a snowbank along the way. Well, Mr. McCook just had to see what a Northern winter was like, and, brother, did he get an eye full.

You inquired about news from Robina, and by chance a letter came from her in Saturday's post. The Madam writes to no one, and so of course Robina doesn't ever hear from her, save through me. She reports a busy but happy Christmas, and says both sisters Dormon are in Shreveport, - both Caroline and "ole Virginie" having sinus trouble and being worked on by some local doctor, although their presence in town was not revealed to Dr. Wenk and his family, - for obvious reasons. To entertain Caroline, Robina told her about the negro, heir to his white parents, and immediately Caroline wanted to go see him and write a book, showing the horrors of having two races in the same country, - or some such, - an attitude that Robina naturally resented, and accordingly will not take Caroline to see the man. Miss Dormon is such a bag on such matters. I always remember the time she remarked to the Madam: "Isn't it awful to think some day the whole country..." to which the Madam thundered: "No."

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Miss Nellie's letter 1/1/48

2759

January 5th, 1948.

Memorandum:

What a delightful surprise to find your letter in today's post. What with one having come to hand on Saturday, I somehow had not anticipated another so soon, and the unexpectedness gave it added zest.

Your account of the snow interested me enormously. It is difficult to imagine your march to your brother's, - having to go single file. I was in New York in the early '20's when the snow, turned to ice, put lower Fifth Avenue into something like a series of little canyons, but this snow must be mountainous.

How whole-heartedly I concur with you in your observations regarding L. J. and how much it means to have such a sweet, sympathetic soul so near by. It is a real "misere" that circumstances prevent you both from communing together more frequently. How right is the Madam whenever she declares, - as ever so often she does, that everyone should have a room or a house to call his own. I suppose that is one reason, too, why I have always thought the maison de la reine and the maison du seigneur, combined into a single unit, but quite independent, the one to the other, is such an ideal arrangement for civilized people. Half the joy of life is keeping the memory bright regarding the treasures and contributions the successive centuries have offered their successors, and surely not the least of these treasures is along the lines we fashion in our minds for Arenbourg.

I appreciate your thoughtfulness in giving me particulars regarding the Princess Anne de Bourbon-Parma. Regarding Zita, and the relationship, it is quite clear in my mind now, what with the information you passed along. You say she is the daughter of Rene de Bourbon-Parma, and, that makes Sixtus de Bourbon-Parma her uncle and Zita her aunt. I don't know why the Bourbon-Parmas have always interested me so much, possibly in part because I knew some of them, and possibly, too, because the line had such a distinctive number of women appearing in its geneological tree. I suppose

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you have heard many of the tales, for example, of whom Zita was the only lady in Austria that Kaiser Wilhelm couldn't make behave. It must have taken lots of courage for anyone to withstand the Emperor's arrogance, but Zita was equal to it. Somehow the courage she manifested in putting him in his place has long since seemed to me something almost as heroic as the Duke of Windsor's stamina to withstand the pressure of his family, the Kingdom, the Empire and the politicians. And I admire it tremendously.

It goes without saying that I was enchanted to hear in this morning's news broadcast that King Michael had safely crossed over into Switzerland. Frankly, I should not have been surprised if the Bolsheviks had decided at the last moment to hold him as hostage. I believe you once truned through the volume Michael's grandfather gave me. Nicholas was such a kindly man, I hope his resting place will not be disturbed by the new regime. I brought the Bertrand Louis XIV with me to Melrose, so we may be sure to have it at Arenbourg. I wish I had brought the Prince de ligne volume along, too, - the one given me by the old man's great grandson when he was Ambassador at Washington. I remember having shown it to Tilloah once, but don't recall that you saw it at the time. It is the play, written by the 18th century Prince de Ligne, when his son married at the Chateau de Beloeil, near Brussels. I certainly hope that estate survived the recent war, for it housed wonderful treasures.

It's nice to know that you, too, are currently doing a bit of reading from the same Book that I read from daily. I should be so interested to learn how you find the King James version. It must all seem a little odd, what with your own edition so firmly in mind. It's a curious thing, but I never did read any serious account of the relative cultural values of the various accepted texts, most widely accepted in various European tongues. Never did I appreciate the King James version so much as when I sampled a few modern renditions into contemporary English, - Moffet and the like. I don't doubt that their precise translations from the Greek and Hebrew may be more perfect, but it is the same kind of perfection that can set you straight on precisely how many tints a single rose or sunset may embrace, - and by tearing them apart, ruin all their respective spiritual values. I reckon those of the new school of thought would find me hopelessly old fashioned, and so I must be, if liking the King James version is an unmistakable sign, for I like it best.

King James, for example, speaking of Faith, Hope and

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Faith, Hope and Charity, says that "without them, I become as sounding brass and tinkling cimbals," whereas the Modernists, as I recall, like Moffet, says, relative to the same line, that unless I have these, "I become like a noisey gong".

Well, I like the former better, even though I can't hope to spell all the words correctly, - and thus I fold.....

In September or October I ordered a heap of things from Ed Rand, - and haven't seen him since, and this in spite of the fact that he said at the time that many of the things ordered would do best if planted in November.

Dr. Eleanor dropped in to call on the Madam and me shortly before supper. She was driving a borrowed truck in the Gorham area one day last week and went into the ditch to avoid striking an embryo hill billy, wrecking the pick-up but completely, - not the go-carten. But she escaped fairly well, and even proceeded to New Orleans on the following day. I think they are extraordinary the way they get about.

I walked to the "go-carten" with her, and she confided to me that she had passed by the Alexandria hospital where Bessie be-got her child. The doctors told Dr. Eleanor that there was quite a racket when the child arrived. It seems some Kane River mulattoes, - some of the Balthazars, I believe, were in the colored ward, and when they say Bessie's baby they insisted that it, too, should be placed in the colored and not the white baby section. They claimed Bessie should be in the colored section, too, but as she was entered as white, she remained in her original ward, - white, - although a concession was made regarding the baby, which, Dr. E. says, is definitely of negroid parentage, - at least on one side. So much for the record; both of Bessie and of mulatto racial consciousness.

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I never cease to be appalled when I consider the income of local physicians. I suppose the American Medical Society has its corporation such a tightly closed one that anyone enjoying the special dispensation of being permitted to attach M. D. at the end of his name automatically is in line for a considerable share of the community's wealth, but somehow in this area, serving the under-privileged for the most part, it seems extraordinary that I should have heard the lady today remark:

"I'm really glad to have taken a day out for the little trip to New Orleans and back. I simply must get a little relaxation now and then. I'll admit that two or three hundred dollars a day is pleasant, but after all, one is bound to give a little time to living now and then."

Two or three hundred times, three hundred sixty five.

On the home front, I must refer to the re-employed cook, Mattie. She is a pure "D" nigger, and while, like Sam Brown, she doesn't appear on my list of favorites, still, as in Sam's case, I relish the surprising color of her speech and the revelation of her cultural viewpoints. I had a classic example of the latter just as the Madam and I were leaving the supper table. Mattie remarked that while she was absent from the Melrose kitchen during the past year, she had purchased several pieces of furniture, including a \$189.75 bed. I had always known that rosewood and mahogany were imported woods prized by the ante bellum planter, but Mattie gave a twist to their virtues I had never thought of before.

"It sure is a fine bed I done bought me. It will always be lookin' up, too, 'cause it's dark-dark, -the wood is, and ain't never going to show no fly-specks."

The Corner Shop of R. H. Macy please copy.
and this from Peter, referring to a disagreeable lady of color, caught in the coils of the law last summer for shop-lifting in Cloutierville. It seems the lady caught Peter and some of the boys gambling last Saturday. Said Peter, in telling me about it: "I never likes that lady, always trying to dominize people. And she say it's a shame, - us-es gambling". I, and me, - don't say nothin' 'cause she's older than me, but me, I wanted to say: "Sure is shameful at Melrose, but it ain't nothin' but business in Cloutierville, I reckon....."

2764

January 7th, 1948.

Memorandum:

And so, after wondering about the Rands, both the Dr. and Mrs. arrived late this afternoon, seeming to be in fine shape, after a prolonged series of little illnesses that swung around the holiday period.

It seems Ed. Rand has been on the sick list, too, which no doubt accounts for the failure of certain plants to put in an appearance.

The enclosure from Essie Mae speaks for itself. I shall respond that she will undoubtedly be welcomed, although one never knows from day to day in just what frame of mind her hostess may find herself at any given point.

An example of how the mental processes get slightly out of joint from time to time is best illustrated by a little round with a Burpee seed catalogue this morning. The Madam wanted to look over the listing of candytuff. In the Index it was noted as appearing on page 53. We got to page 48 by various means, but couldn't get any farther. The Madam thought 53 ought to be the next one to 48, - and so she sought and searched. Gradually, by making inquiries about various flowers reproduced on this page and that, we eventually found ourselves on 53, and the lady was delighted. She discovered the notation she was looking for, and read it to me not once, not twice, not thrice but five times, - and each time as though she was running over the particulars for the first time after a lengthy search for them. Surely these little details can be of little interest to you, but I pass them along in order you may more readily comprehend the little quirks that develop unexpectedly from time to time.

A post card from Shreveport indicates that Sister will be down to spend the day on Tuesday next. I believe Mr. Bachellier will be here at the same time, and "Misery loves company".

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Wednesday, the 14th, being the Madam's birthday, we shall go to have dinner with Celeste and J. H., - and what with the usual passing pilgrims thrown in, we could really have quite a full week by the time Mesdames Culver and Lester arrive.

The aftermath of my cold seems to have reduced my vim and vigor, and so I wasn't too sorry today when spading at Arenbourg, Uncle Or came by to chat a bit with me. He thought the magnolias were looking exceptionally well, - what survived, and although none of them grew much, I must say that I'm expecting them to jump when spring breaks through. I'm not busy at the moment, trying to re-cover the mimosa and gardenias with the cotton hulls, for somebody's chickens, - I reckon Bluff's, have been busy scratching the stuff all away. Eventually I shall take Charlie, the dachshund, with me to Arenbourg, and marauding chickens will be greatly scattered if not eliminated completely.

I saw Peter late this evening and recommended that he drop by to pick me up between 7 and 8, taking me to call on little Elam, his wife and baby. They have recently moved into the house log left when moving up the road. I can't ever remember how old Elam is but he and his little wife seem about 17 or 18, and their fine, bright-eyed little off-spring, seems to be a part of the setting that is more of the toy world than the mature work-a-day one we associate with marriage and child bearing. The house was simply, comfortable and altogether pleasant. The Lands had brought me a nice bottle of wine, and we took that along with us. The evening passed along merrily, and I was glad to talk over old times with Elam and to get acquainted with his family. But I pulled out fairly early for I wanted to be back to hear a re-broadcast of Mr. Truman's State of the Nation speech, - which I did and liked because it was so liberal and so much like F. D. R., - and obviously so filled with aspirations that will force the Republicans to "kick-in" a little liberality when they get ready to make up a platform, although I suspect that party is in such reactionary hands that the platform will constitute nothing xx but words.

I heard Senator Taft the night before and the inhuman quality of his voice is frightening, I think. If he ever gets the Republican nomination, the party will do well never to let him broadcast, I think, for unlike F. D. R., Mr. Taft would never be able to sell baby carriages to old maids and make them believe they were going to have x use for them.

But it is late

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January 8th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Today is Jackson Day, - a State holiday, although one would never guess it from where one surveys the world from this remote plantation.

All the tractors were going full tilt, stirring up the ground beneath the pecane trees, breaking up cotton land in the Red River area, and concentrating in one or two groups at carpentry, - putting an addition on Fugabou's house and building another new house for someone or other on Little River. So Melrose celebrates the triumphs of Andrew Jackson at New Orleans.

A question put to me by an uneducated negro today revealed the curious mental pictures that no doubt arise in such minds that are short on formal learning and long on radio listening:

"That fightin' that's a-goin' on off yonder, - Greece or some such. I seen one of them big old monkeys in Alexandria at the circus that the man called a gorilla. Is that the same kind of mens or monkeys we'se sendin' all them guns for to fight with off yonder."

Gorillas or guerillas, - and after all, I guess they are about the same thing, - although I should have thought about it if I hadn't been asked.

What with the weather continuing delightfully warm and sunny, the dirt continues to fly at Arenbourg. I'm not in my full stride again, but I'm getting back at a fair pace, and shall have things fairly in hand if and when the Ed and order comes through. The so called Japanese live oaks, - which I have come to the conclusion are nothing more than some fast-growing variety of Louisiana live oak, - still seem to be alive, - miraculous to say, for live oaks are among the more difficult trees to transplant, and these at Arenbourg, coming from Mobile, Alabama, were quite a long time en route. Of course the summer will tell the tale.

2767

Paul Veidt, when here a few weeks ago, spoke of a man in New Orleans who deals exclusively in prints. I don't remember ever having run across such a dealer in New York, - except those shops devoted to something approaching rather expensive ones. It seems to me there ought to be a second hand print shop somewhere around Manhattan, - something like the 4th Avenue book shops where one might have heaps of fun turning through prints exclusively, - and within some sort of a moderate price range.

A long time ago there was a lady by the name of Margaret Dashiell of Richmond, Virginia who dealt exclusively in prints, but I never did visit her place of business, although I did get some things through her. Somehow or other I lost some quite interesting prints, - about the size of those in the Anhalt book, - Chateaux et Maisons Royales de France, - some unusually interesting ones of Marly-le-Roi and Louveciennes.

I think I shall write the Richmond Chamber of Commerce and inquire if the lady still does business.

And what brought all this up was an item in a book catalogue the other day, describing a broadside advertising negroes for sale, - dating from the 1850's, I believe. So many negroes, as you know, were brought to Mississippi and Louisiana in the 1850's, - from Maryland and Virginia, and I have no doubt that quite a few of the posters advertising these wares must have been printed at the time, and a few of them, of course, are bound to have survived the years. The one listed in the catalogue mentioned above was priced at \$35.00, - which seems exorbitant to me. Once I had some rather pretty broadsides, issued by the Railroads of France or Paris-Lyon-Mediterranean, with some of the Loire chateaux in quite pretty colors, - but heaven alone knows where they have gone. If one should run across a broadside or poster, either advertising "likely negroes" or possibly advertising for a runaway, I should think it might go quite nicely as a library print in this region.

Momentarily, - of all things, - I'm reading some kind of a semi-scientific thing on bacteria, which is instructive to my unscientific mind, but not very exhilarating. Eventually I must get hold of some history or some literature, - or both. Did you tell me you read Remarque's Arch of Triumph. I think you did. I haven't as yet. I'm so glad I have my Bible to hand. I shall brush up on a few more microbes and then read a couple of chapters from the Book before folding.....

2768

January 9th, 1948.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your long long letter in this morning's post. It will well serve me for two days at least, for when about half through, the plantation bell summoned my Ethiopian back to his labors, and so I have another day to anticipate with double anticipation.

It is certainly kind of you to give me so many interesting particulars about Dr. Butler. I had not heard of the death of his daughter, Sarah Schuyler, and knew nothing of the contents of his will. I was interested to learn that he was buried in Patterson, New Jersey, - a coincidence, - or rather a very involved tie between Dr. Butler and the Schuyler name, for if memory serves, Alexander Hamilton, husband of one of the early Schuylers, commissioned Major L'Enfant to lay out Patterson, New Jersey, sometime before or after Major L'Enfant laid out the city of Washington.

Although I have been in Patterson a few times, I seem to have an unusually vague conception of the city, and it always impressed me as a jumble of factories and unpleasant residential districts. Perhaps the L'Enfant plans were not good, - or perhaps they were alright but were not maintained as the town developed. It is interesting that two personalities, - one the best brains in his Federalist Party, the other in his Republican Party a century later, should both have some association with Patterson.

And how remarkable that you should have discovered the Wurtel book. I doubt very much if the Madam has it in her collection. I think she would be quite enchanted, although I would urge to you to retain it for yourself if it seems to have any especial interest. I don't know if the youthful widow Wurtel went to her sister's wedding on Dec. 27th to which we were bidden, but of course, didn't go. A letter from the General to the Madam indicates that he attended but mentioned nothing as to his millionaire cousin being present.

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1/9/48

The enclosure from Dora speaks for itself. His reference to my Christmas has to do with an account I wrote him of the night of December 26th, when I attended the Gumbo on Little River. I suppose there weren't too many parallel circumstances in the South, and I'm still impressed by the remarkably vivid pictures that impressed themselves on my memory that night, - the extraordinary aura of light emanating from the white tin roof of the cabin, the brilliant glow of the fire-light with the black faces and black kittens centering or semi-encircling the blazing hearth, and the glistening white geese, floating silently on the pale blue, star spangled surface of Little River, - and best of all, naturally, the exceedingly pleasant sensation about the heart that comes so beautifully to one's consciousness when all hearts are beating as one, each different in manifestation and expression, perhaps, but all bubbling over with a sentiment of good will toward men.

A prevailing dysentery seems to be laying hold of people through the Alexandria-Matchitoches area. All the hands were troubled by it at the holiday season and today my patient was a little more enervated than usual because it had reached her. I pause to knock on wood, as I remark that I have escaped it thus far.

I busied myself at Arenbourg by doing some more planting today. The plantation had purchased some fine pecan trees, - one of which I planted in Unit No. 1, - and I also planted a couple more pear trees, - the pineapple variety, - along the drive leading in from the Bermuda road. As the drive from the Bermuda Road turns at right angles with the balance of the drive, paralleling the highway, but cutting a line of demarcation between Units No. 1 and 2, I think within a few years the angle will be quite pretty, especially in the Spring, when all the pears are in full bloom. I suppose we must have 14 or 16 of these that have survived last summer's heat, and will undoubtedly make a go of it, but what in the world we shall ever do with all the pears, once they get to bearing, heaven alone knows, but we can worry about that when the time comes.

A brief note from little Miss Alberta reports that she has been suffering from a severe cold and still feels miserable generally. I never thought I would live to hear little Miss A. admit that her Mary Baker Eddy-ism, allied with prune juice, wasn't functioning. I shall rip off a letter to her forthwith, making it read like a chapter from Science and Health....

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January 11th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Saturday was good because I had the balance of your nice letter from Friday's post, and I appreciate all the particulars you share with me.

In reference to Fabulous New Orleans, I must say that on second thought I can't tell for the life of me if you had a copy or not, and accordingly, I think we both might be perfectly correct in assuming not. As for the check, it would fit as nicely into Old Louisiana as in the other volume, and since it was of no value at all, I urge you not to give it further thought, should it fail to come to hand.

I'm glad you mentioned the Witch Trial, for although I missed it on Sunday, I caught up with the tail end of it in a re-broadcast on Thursday night, coming in on the thing, I guess, about the same time you did. I'm pleased we both heard it, for I'm sure you found it as enlightening as did I. Although I have long had some vague notion as to such doings, through casual readings in history and Hawthorne's Scarlet Letter, there were several points brought out by the trial of which I was in complete ignorance. For example, I didn't know before that children were incarcerated as witches, - I believe the broadcast mentioned a five or six year old child, - and I never knew before that John Alden, junior, had been clapped into jail as a male broomstick rider. If I caught the mentioned dates aright, these goings on were their highpoint in the 1680's, about the time of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. I have discussed the latter business, centering about the Huguenots, with Dr. Butler at some length. He felt that the primary motive for forcing everybody in France into the Catholic Church or out of the country was basically sound, from an autocratic political viewpoint, since the so-called religious fanatics of the times were probably more concerned with political opposition than religious fervor and had Protestantism at the time not been quashed, gulfs might have widened that would have brought back the devastating religious wars of a hundred years before, - to nobody's advantage. From the little I heard of the witch trial, I gathered that personal spite and

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selfish greed played a large part in the accusations.

I once heard a very interesting lecture on the Salem Witch business, wherein the lecturer explained that finally the whole basis of persecution broke down when one person, styled a witch, guessing that the jig was up anyhow, startled the Court by confessing everything in the indictment, but then, taking a step further, also confessed having secret meetings and plot-hatching conferences with the presiding Judge and jury. This threw the whole procedure into such an up-roar and so frightened the Judge and Prosecuting Attorney, that the whole suit was thrown out of Court, and so ended and witch hunting was forever abandoned in Salem, - as too dangerous a legal sport.

"It's hard being a poor man and havin' no learnin', too", remarked a dusky caller to me this morning. "You see, whiskey makes the poor man's mind rich, and that's why all us-es, such as me, want our little drink now and again".

I pass along this rustic jewel just as it came to me, thinking, - knowing, - that you and Dora and Archibald Rutledge would give it the same value, of greater worth, seemingly, because it falls from the lips of an illiterate darkie and can not be traced to the profound reflections of what the world would hail as a learned philosopher.

There was some kind of a scuffle in the big road last night. Peter and Log tapped at my window this morning at first daylight, just as Sam Peace had arrived with coffee. Peter, it seems, had been clouted on the side of the head with a stick, wielded by Beau Mack, - the fracas stemming from a sub-surface wrangle, as between Peter and Will Rogers, over the affections of Maybelle Williams, Ling Hunter's former wife, now married to a soldier in the European Army. It was a typical nigger mix-up, like the famous Sandbar duel, wherein everyone was murdered save the two duelist who went forth originally to slaughter each other. Ostensibly my advise was sought in untangling the mix up of last mid-night, but in reality, they came to my house primarily because they knew they could relax a little and possibly find some much needed coffee and perhaps a cigarette. Within an hour half a dozen negroes came and went, their grapevine functioning so perfectly as to indicate the momentary whereabouts of one of the contesting parties. It was after all had gone that Puny tapped on my door, and on entering made the above sage observation. And finding it good, I wanted to share it with you.

And finally, picture my disappointment, - intermingled with enchantment, when on turning on my radio at the appoint hour, - 8 p.m., your time, this afternoon, it was neither Alexander Hamilton nor Aaron Burr who bowed, but Wayne King and his orchestra, transcribed.

18. I try for the duel on Thursday night-rebroadcast

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January 12th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Well, Mr. Bachelier failed to arrive, but our disappointment was easily bridged by the nice letter to the Madam which came in the morning post.

The Madam says to tell you she is so glad you mentioned having a reading table of your own, for she will henceforth enjoy hers twice as much, thinking of you making use of the same type of furniture as she is relishing with each turn of the page.

She was as enchanted as I with your excellent vignette, - all too brief, - of moon over Manhattan, and motor-less Fifth Avenue, for once in its existence frozen and stilled. That paragraph was a little gem, and the Madam re-read it a third time to me.

How nice of you to let us know about the latest doings of Corey Wassel and wife, for we had heard nothing of his decision to quit the leper island on grounds that it was not charitably maintained. I cannot help wondering how the balance of his life will unfold, - surely thus far it has been oddity itself. I guess the Hilton volume might be considered a thrilling interlude sandwiched inbetween strange enterprises. Perhaps it will be as well if History contents itself with the one volume and leaves the other sections unrecorded in detail.

And how fascinated I was to learn that Goethe's great grandson should have lived and died in Texas. I can't think of any good reason why he shouldn't have done both things, and yet, somehow, - I know not how, Goethe and all that followed in his direct line, - the latter being totally unknown to me, - is so fixed in my mind as a European manifestation of life and development that I never so much as dreamed that any of his descendants might have passed their lives in the Lone Star state. But perhaps it wasn't so much the European slant on the thing, after all, for I distinctly remember how surprised I was some time back when Robina told us of Victor Herbert's son living in the same geographical unit. I wonder why I still feel that in both

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instances, the offspring of such parents somehow seem out of place anywhere between the Sabine and the Rio Grande.

At midnight last night, on a news broadcast from New York, I learned of the bombing of the bus station in Alexandria which I used to use when heading to and from Natchez. I listened for particulars this morning on local stations, and while it was mentioned, it was so buried among Marshall plans and Jewish bombings in Palestine that it appeared to have excited no interest in news rooms of New Orleans, Alexandria or Shreveport stations. It almost seemed that there was a concerted effort on the part of these stations to "hush-hush" the matter, - or, as I sometimes suspect, the local stations content themselves with leaving it to the teletypes out of New York to supply everything that has to be said over the air, regardless of how things may be popping right in their own back yards.

How often I bless you for my nice Talking Bible, which I am enjoying so much. The New Orleans public library seems to have slumped with the holidays and aren't getting anywhere with my requests for particular items, and the stuff they are sending me, while alright, isn't filling my current needs. At the moment I am reading a Dickens novel whose name I cannot spell, - Martin Chuzzlewit, or some such, - and word-wordy is the piece, if you don't mind. But when I'm done with my nightly stint, I can always turn to my nice Christmas present and thus end the day happily.

I assume that Mr. Pachellier and Sister both may descend upon us on the morrow, and while I see no reason why there should be a skip in the regularity of these Memoranda, don't be alarmed if tomorrow's should be a day or so late.

In yesterday's pilgrims, - there were a couple of batches from the Dallas area, two or three different ones spoke with definite lack of enthusiasm for Mr. Kane, - sounding, withal, quite pleasant. From your report of last week, I gather the Tribune book worm is still enthralled by the charms of the "Bayou". I'm so glad you mentioned the fact that Mr. Kane is represented as being in a mood to purchase a plantation. That certainly would be fine, and I reckon he could get rid of his first million dollars about as fast with a plantation as anything he could think of. His surprising ignorance of the negro would be the first element to get him into hot water, and being one of those peculiarly rustic individuals, born in a large city, - of which there is nothing more rustic in the world, he would be out beyond his depths before he really got started. When I recall that in the plant growing about Melrose, he didn't know the commonest of Louisiana shrubs, I gave up right there.....

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January 13th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Thirty million times would be insufficient to re-iterate how happy is Arenbourg today, for there is a promise in the heavens that all the things planned for Arenbourg during this planting season can be ordered, both from trans-border houses, but also from Ed Rand, so that if both sources should come through with original orders, all can be managed promptly without any danger of a squeeze.

In spite of a hurly-burly kind of day, I took time off to make a quick survey to be certain I could manage all, should all come to hand, the withal, so to speak, having arrived to bring all the plans, hopes and aspirations for the current season into perfect balance. If, by chance, you should contact Lydia alone, do confide to her that even from this distance, I easily recognize another glow streaming from her already star spangled diadem.

You inquire about the Wertle volume, and its disposition. I think I should retain it for a while at least. How extraordinary to have found the draft of the letter in the volume. How much more valuable it makes the volume itself, especially to members of the family whom I haven't met as yet. If you have already decided that you want to send the volume along to the Madam, that decision meets with my hearty approval, but if, on the other hand, you have concluded that it might be as well to retain it for a while with a view to ultimate disposal, I would applaud that line of action, too. And if you haven't decided, and await this final opinion, I would retain the item for a while at least.

How nice of you to tell me about the Diamond Necklace film, and how thoughtful of you to pass along the various details of the scenes, for knowing me as you do, I feel quite certain that you readily understand how much I reveled in learning of each particular. I had never heard of this story being made into a film, but obviously it is one of the finest type of story for a costume and historic mystery that was ever cooked up, and I shall often refer to the matter, I presume, as points that interest me exceedingly come to mind.

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The story of the Necklace was quite vivid in my mind because, aside from the details I gathered in my mind covering all data surrounding it, but primarily because (interruption) I took particular pains to visit as many of the spots that figured in the curious set of coincidences, and always at about the same time of year, - the month and day, - that they transpired a century and a half ago. I recall especially my exquisite pleasure in visiting the Jardin du Roy, just beyond the Orangerie, on the anniversary of the meeting of the Cardinal de Rohan and the person he took for Majesty. I recall how delightful was the moon, how heavenly fragrant the perfumes from the adjoining box and rose trees, and how luscious and cool the creamy white marbles appeared at the time of my visit. I must talk endlessly about all this at another sitting. I don't know if you chanced to visit the Bibliotheque Nationale while in Paris. As I recall, it was the Cardinal's town house when the Necklace business was getting neatly all tangled up. His stables in Lorraine accommodated 600 horses, for one thing, if that means anything except that he certainly must have given the impression to any set of jewelers that he could swing such a thing as a mere diamond necklace.

But enough of all this. The weather man says you have been having a murky day in your neighborhood. Here it has been sunny but with a cool wind from the North.

I never had so many people whom I wanted to see and couldn't because there were people of little interest who stole my time from those I should have preferred. Of course Sister blew in with the usual racket, bringing a couple of ladies with her, - one who, by some error, seemed quite nice, and the other somewhat after her own pattern.

The Shreveport contingent contributed nothing at all to the gaiety of nations. Mr. Bachelier also arrived from the opposite direction but at the same time. In mid afternoon, Sister pulled out with her crowd, and that was when I flew to Arenbourg. Mr. Bachelier was awaiting my return at home, and returned here with me after supper for too prolonged a sitting, - not for its lack of interesting things to discuss, but because I knew there were a couple of other people who didn't want to come until I had said goodnight to him, - people of color and distinction whom I have long wanted to compare notes with on several subjects. But my guest remained too long, and my potential ones could linger longer, - and so that was that.

But day is done and I'm tired and shall sleep well, blessing Lydia in my dreams for this season's seal she affixed to Arenbourg's aspirations....

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January 14th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Slap on the top of this morning's incoming mail was your air mail greeting card for the Madam on this, her birthday. It was a lovely card, as well you know, and the parade of flowers and the sentiment, - not to mention the fact you had remembered her anniversary, moved the Madam to moistened eyes.

We went to J. H. and Celeste for birthday dinner. The wind was chill but the skies all blue and sunny, so the little outing was altogether pleasant. Chicken gumbo was the resistance piece, and delicious it was, with plenty of chicken floating about in it, together with toothsome Deerfield sausages.

For some reason, which I cannot imagine, Mr. Bachelier declined the gumbo, which, I should imagine, should be the most digestible stuff in the world, but perhaps he doesn't care for chicken gumbo.

He returned to the Cloutierville area in the late afternoon and with his departure, the domestic program resumed its accustomed pace.

A letter to the Madam from Essae Mae reports that following Friday night's lecture in Natchitoches, she will drive to Melrose with Lois and a friend on Saturday morning about 10. I shall write them tonight to plan having lunch with us before they head out for St. Francisville which, they say, they must reach on Saturday evening.

In pursuance of our recent conversation regarding the Queen's Necklace, I notice holidayxxx I notice Hollywood is about to do a new version of the old Dumas classic, Three Musketeers. I reckon that story must hold top rank for the number of times it has been movie-ized. The news broadcast I hear centered on the fact that some actress named Turner had refused to play the role of Lady de Winter.

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We got a taste of Jack Frost's handiwork last night and are getting another example of it tonight, with the thermometer slated to climb down to 30 degrees. But the promise for tomorrow is fair and much warmer, so I reckon - and hope - the polar atmosphere is but a passing phase.

The J. H. Henry family have already voted in advance of the January 20th election. It seems they take off on Sunday for Albany, Georgia, to be gone for four or five days. I believe there is a National Pecan Growers Association being held in Albany during the week of the 18th. I'm glad J. H. will be away for a week, for that will enable the darkies to go ahead with the wiring of their cabins, which they undertake by mutual assistance, and half a dozen are anxious to get electric current circulating before summer sets in, - and the absence of the master will enable them to head-in to the business full tilt.

The old adage about truth issuing from the mouths of small children, - not to mention the element of merriment and surprise, - was patently illustrated a day or two ago at the store where a crowd of negroes were standing about awaiting the mail. Maybelle's 5 year old child was dancing about, warding off the chill of the morning air. Log was there and Zelma, who is Puny's wife, and a flock of other children and grown ups. I should have explained that Maybelle was or is the bag over who the scuffle took place in the road last Saturday night. Long addressed the child, saying: "Boy, how you all keeps warm these cold nights."

"I sleeps warm", the child replied, "'cause I sleeps with mama, and mostly Peter he sleep with us, but sometimes Mr. Puny....."

Whereupon everyone roared, and Zelma said that reminded her that although she had come for mail, she had better purchase a rolling pin before leaving for home and husband.

I want to prod the Library of Congress again about the 18th century Paris setting of Franklin and all, - which you are currently reading. I apologize for bothering you for the title, author and publisher again, but it has slipped my mind, and from what you tell me, I simply must get it recorded, - but don't rush about looking up the particulars, please, for any time will do.....

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January 15th, 1948.

Memorandum:

The cold snap of the past two days has given way before balmy breezes from the Gulf, but the "eather" Man promises another frost next week. So far, so good, and we shall shiver when the next go-round arrives.

Aurellia announces that she has her new "yellar" dress all out. She is particularly enchanted that there was ample material for her to make two pockets, too, each of them to have a frill, not to mention a frill running from sleeve to sleeve, front and back about the bust department. She wants her picture "struck" when her new raiment is climbed into for the first time. I heartily favor that idea, so that we may bounce her likeness in your direction, in order that you may thus view for yourself what your Christmas gift did for her.

The incoming mail gets heavier these days, as we move toward next Tuesday's election, what with so many candidate running for every State and Parish job. But outside the political field there was a personal note or two to the Madam today. Rudolph wrote that he is doing alright, inspite of the cold and snow. I'm hoping he will keep the snow, at least, in the Dallas-Denton-Fort Worth triangle. I had thought he might mention trying to slide over here between terms, but he didn't say anything about it. Sister wrote that she had a wonderful time while at Melrose on Tuesday. She didn't mention to her mother that she had spent more time at Magnolia, be-deviling Miss Sally, than at Melrose. I had telephoned the Worsleys before she reached here, so that they might be barricaded, if they chose, before she crashed into Cloutierville. What a business, all in all.

I was enchanted to see mine host of December 26th at the store this afternoon. He and his son, "little" Robert, had driven up cattle from the Red River area, as the plantation is shipping it to Alexandria on the morrow.

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Dee-dee-Boy said he had had such a fine time at the gumbo that he wanted to have another again soo if I would come out some night with Ezra and his family. He said he had been keeping a turkey, roosting in his pear tree, for almost a month, thinking he would keep it until next year. But he had had such a nice time on the night following Christmas, that he would like to offer the turkey up for another evening whenever I would care to journey to little river. It all pleased me ever so much, of course, and what with a fattening moon, I think I shall recommend one of these nights before too long.

Eleven year old Alvin Johnson came to see me today. He is the eldest child of Elmer, that one-time Melrose cook, - to turkey roasting fame. Elmer always impressed me as a kindly soul, like a cow, but equally dumb among the pots and skillets. Her son seemed equally kind, but astonished me with his intellect which appears to be far above the average. I asked him about school. He said he hadn't gone today, what with the cold wind of this morning, but would go this afternoon. We fell to talking about shoes. He pointed to his and remarked, - of all unexpected things, - that he was very easy on shoes and his present ones would certainly last him two years longer. He explained that when they give out at the seams, he can sew them readily enough and that several children and quite a few big folks come to him to assist them in such matters. He says last year, when they lived some place miles from here, he picked up quite a few nickles and dimes, - "and you know how that helps all folks along", and that he worked in a grocery store from 7 until 9 in the morning. He attended a school with many pupils but only two teachers, and as his grade, - the 5th, did not recite until 9:30 the teacher said it would be alright if he arrived half an hour after the usual opening. He said he and his mother and the other children had made several bales of cotton, but had lost a few, for "one night at midnight, when part of the cotton was in the barn, I woke up and saw a great light, and it was the barn". Most local children and grown-ups I know would have said a "big light", but for Alvin, it was a "great light". He had come to ask if he might keep the cows and mules out of the young planting of bamboo across the river near his house, and if he might, when the bamboo grew, select a pole for himself, he goes fishing so much. I told him he might drive off the mules if he liked, but that he need not wait for the bamboo to grow, what with all the fine poles we could see at the far end of the white garden. And so Alvin went his way, happy as a clam, and here I am still talking about the child.

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January 16th, 1948.

Curious weather. This morning it was so fine and warm that I wore no coat. The prediction was cooler and fair tonight. It's cooler alright, but not too fair, what with a heavy sleet giving the so-called "white garden" which is generally green at this time of year, a thorough coating of powdered sugar.

I certainly hope the ice doesn't break the electric current somewhere between this point and a few hundred miles between Beaumont, Texas and little Rock, Arkansas, along which, as I understand it, this neighborhood is served with electricity.

Lois Ester certain is having hard luck for her lecture in town, I imagine. If she gets anybody out on a night like this, it will be remarkable. I suppose she will be here with Essie Mae for dinner tomorrow, - assuming we don't get a New York blizzard in the mean time.

The enclosure speaks for itself. I never before heard of each member of a family of two having sinus trouble at the same time. At least so far as hospitalization goes, I reckon it is a good idea, if done the thing must be, since they can thus compare notes and ache together. And I must further confess my ignorance and admit that I never heard of sinus of the ear, - which the Madam says this letter reports. I suppose one could have it in the ear, since that is located in the head, but I had always supposed that the business was somehow hooked up with the nose or throat.

I heard a combination of words today that seemed so odd to me that I must repeat them to you, and possibly if you try them out on L. J., she will find them sounding odd together, and you will probably find them even more so, when trying to pronounce them aloud. As they aren't very remarkable, and no joke is a joke that has to be explained, the whole thing is of little account. To begin with, I should explain that in the Gane River country one never is heard to use the word "police" or "policeman". Such officers are always referred to in but one way: - "the Law". But Road Commissioners who see to repairs on the highways

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are official styled "Police Jurors", and the darkies if they mention them at all, refer to such officials as the Police Jurors", - their legal title.

With these points in mind, one can readily see how Mattie, the cook, in speaking to me of Sam Brown's dog, declared: "That there dog is sure 'nough mean. I'se scared of him. What's that kind they calls him, - oh, yes, that there dog's a German Police Jury dog". Now there certainly isn't aything at all remarkable about all that, and yet whenever I try to rattle it off, - German Police Jury dog, I seem to get it all tangled up. Perhaps it's the weather.

I read a little from Re.arque's Arch of Triumph, which seems to be a refugee novel, centering about the St. Louis neighborhood. It seems to be well done, especially the sentences and the profound observations on human behavior. But so far as I have gone, - and that isn't far, there seems to be lots to do about prostitutes, etc., and, as stated too many times in the past, I seem to tend more in the direction of such brackets of society as typified, for example, by the characters in The Cathedral, whom I see more clearly and sympathize with more acutely, - possibly because I feel I comprehend their problems a little more intimately.

Referring to the enclosure again, I might remark in passing that Whitfield Mack is the husband of Dr. and Mrs. Rand's only daughter, which I may or may not have mentioned before.

Last night, I combed the air waves mightily for the re-broadcast of the Hamilton-Burr duel of Sunday, but never could track it down. I attribute the whole thing to the local politicians who seem to have all stations from Natchez, Mississippi to Monterey, Mexico, sewed up for their final harangues prior to Tuesday's election. I certainly am tired of all the baloney that is being dished out from every microphone, and none of them seem to have sufficient shense of showmanship to be so entertaining. Although I did hear Mayor Morrison of New Orleans speaking for Sam Jones last night, and I must say he gave a Shakespearian value to his words and built phrases that were arresting in themselves, - so much so that I paid not the slightest attention to what he was driving at, since the rendition, like Mr. Scourby's, was sufficiently good to make everything else of secondary interest. Perhaps by next Thursday the politicians will be washed up and I can get back to finding something or other, but nothing so much as those two prize politicians, - Hamilton and Burr.....

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January 18th 1948.

Memorandum:

My weather man says it's cold-cold in New York this week end. I hope you are warm and cosy in spite of it.

Friday night's sleet left half an inch of snow on the ground yesterday, and Saturday night it was 14 degrees above, but today the sun was bringt and finished off the white covering, and tomorrow the water system will be thawed out and I shall be enchanted at the opportunity of removing my two day's growth of beard.

What with the electric current not being cut off, I have been able to read further in the Arch of Triumph, - and I guess I'm about half way through. I find the work disturbingly well executed. I guess the reason I find the book disturbing is because I can't decide if I am viewing a wonderfully penetrating picture of a group of people, so clearly portrayed that they seem to be alive and made up of people I know, - or if, - and this is what gets me down, if the whole thing may not be a picture of myself, my own problems and emotions.

George Brewster is the reader of this volume and a very excellent reader he is, too. I find pleasure in the ease with which he rattles off the names of old familiar streets radiating from the Arc de Triomphe, with but a single jolt when he mentioned Rue Georges Cinqieme which long years of custom had me calling Georges Cinq.

Essae Mae had written that she and Lois Lester and Mrs. Montgomery would arrive at Melrose about 10 a.m., on Saturday, - which I supposed might be about noon, - knowing of other schedules. I was accordingly surprised when they rooled in at 10 o'clock. They had been invited for dinner, but they declined. Mrs. Lester was coming down with a cold and didn't want to get out of the car, and so there she remained while the other two ladies went into the big house for a few minutes. I thought Mrs.

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Lester needed something to warm himself up a bit, and Celeste, passing that way, dashed off through the snow, bringing back a glass of white port. I in the mean time, dashed to the big house for a heavy woolen blanket with which I wrapped up her legs quite snug and tight. She responded to the wine and the covering, chatted as gayly as ever, and within a few minutes, all three were headed down the road toward St. Francisville and home.

I believe there is a widening gap developing in the Culver-Lester relations, noted some time back, and underlined today when Essae Mae confided to the Madam that Mrs. Lester required quite a bit more babying that she was capable of expending, - not being proficient in such matters. I fear it is the old, old story demonstrating the difficulty besetting a happy relationship wherein one party has loads of money and can afford to require attention while the second party hasn't so much in worldly goods and cannot afford to offer hints and requests for personal attention. Oft times the poor must exercise greater restraint and greater imagination than the rich, - and the greatest weakness of the rich is the fact that they often forget - or never realize -- that restraint and imagination are required to keep their relations with those on other economic rungs of the ladder in harmony, the one with the other.

As the final week of pre-election broadcasts from State and Parish offices thunders violently toward its culmination, the quality of the speeches, - and especially those harangues from the lesser fry take on astonishing qualities. Today one Grundy Sampite, - accent on the "e", made an especially revealing address. He is a Cloutierville hill-billy, running for Sheriff, - a veteran of the late war. I should love to have a transcription of his 15 minute talk. Mr. Bachelier and Eugene, the clerk, both of whom have known him for ever, say he will get but two votes for himself, - his own and his mama's. I'm afraid, if his mama knows anything, he may have lost hers today. There was nothing leveled at mamas in his speech, but he spoke so strangely that even mate mal love might have misgivings about such a speaker wearing a Sheriff's badge. Off hand, I recall he complained about the present Sheriff confiscating "intoxicated liquors", - whatever they are, and he quoted from a circular letter from the present Sheriff's office, "to which the Sheriff's own signature was "asphixiated", and ended up by complaining mightily because the power of the Parish and the State is now "in the hands of the manicurists". What in the world could have been the word which he pronounced as "manicurists".....

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January 19th, 1948.

Memorandum:

How nice to have your Wednesday and Thursday letters to hand in today's post. So many things to entertain me, so many things I should like to talk with for hours on end.

The "Palais Royal" poem enchanted me. How wonderful that you should have remembered that I once dwelt there, and how sweet of you to send it along to me. I think I shall memorize it, although I did not do so today, for there were several people breaking in on things and my Ethiopian is not so bi-lingual as some of our mulattoes. But learn it I shall, and until I do, I shall have the pleasure of running over it ever day, even though the progress be leisurely.

How nice of you to tell me all about Frederike Sweig's book, published in 1946. I must apologize for having to inquire a second or rather for the first time, - for having to ask you to set me straight again on the exact title, - which I think you mentioned was The Biography of Stephen Zweig. I shall write to old Xenophon P. Smith, asking that it be recorded, although I may not get anywhere. It seems to me it would be ever so interesting for those who have read The World of Yesterday, - and the other way round, too, since they probably both dove tail quite neatly.

It was characteristicall, sweet of you to recall Mr. Barbour and a suggestion I once made, - but please, please believe me when I tell you that at the time I threw in the phrase "if you should chance to meet him again", - or whatever I said, - I really didn't have any idea of recommending that you contact him directly. Frankly I don't care if I am ever on the Board or not, - for it is probably a fact that the Board "cuts no ice" with title selections for recordings. I have a feeling that possibly someone or some group may have some influence at some times and at other times none. The September to December selections of the past year I found especially Xenophon-ish. But please, please don't even consider the Barbour business, for I never did seriously. I wonder, - the thought comes to me as I write, - if the "roust in French was ever completed, - the edition which Miss Smith advised Mr. Barbour would send me -- eventually. Of course I have

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never heard anything.

That you should have taken the trouble to travel to Meudon, via Baedeker, following receipt of my letter, flatters and floors me. But I'm glad to know you found the terrace and the Observatory, and it is pleasant to contemplate the chance that someday we may explore the neighborhood together. You are the only person in my entire life who has ever even suggested that it wouldn't bore you, and that applies even to years long past when I lived in Paris and never in all my efforts was I ever successful in getting anyone to go there with me or to explore vanished Bellevue, or "the wreck of sweet St. Cloud" or "Arly". There are so many nice people in the world -- if -- we are only lucky enough to find them.

I had completely forgotten, - if, indeed, I ever knew, that the 4th Avenue book shops really do go in much for prints. You are kind enough to say you will give their wares a once over now and then. I hope it will afford you some pleasure, but I beg you not to go searching about save at times when you really feel some personal impulse to do so. As for the old posters announcing Slave Sales, I reckon they may not be numbered in such collections, for the paper on which they were printed was often of poor quality, and by their bulky nature, - I suppose they were perhaps 3 by 6 feet or so, - undoubtedly subjected them to quick destruction as soon as their brief utilitarian purpose had been served.

Ezra dropped in to see me today. While he was here, Aurellia passed by and Ezra offered to carry her and Bessie's baby to Cloutierville to see the lady doctor, if Aurellia cared to have him. I had just told Ezra what Aurellia had relayed to me the day before. It seems Bessie's baby is sick. For several days, its mother and aunt had wondered what should be done about it. Elmer, - that remarkable ex-cook, stopped by their house and on learning of the baby's illness, immediately recommended a cure.:

"You put two spoonfuls of sugar in a tin pan and put it on a hot stove until the sugar starts making a big old smudge. Then you undress the baby and pass him through the smoke, face down first, and then the other end up or down on the next go round. Repeat this treatment for nine days and the baby wont be sick no more".

I asked Aurellia if she had begun the treatments yet. She had. She asked me what I thought. I thought two things:-she'd better take the cild to the lady doctor, and that after 9 days of passing through the smoke treatment, the baby wouldn't be sick anymore.....

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January 20th, 1948.

Memorandum:

And so the lady doctor and her husband stopped in to say Howdy to the Madam. And they saw her Christmas reading desk. And they were but enchanted with it and asked if we could tell them how they might secure one.

And so I'm bending down heavily upon your kindness, wondering if the store from which you purchased the one you sent the Madam might still have one, and if it could be ordered.

I know perfectly well that if they still are available, you will put forth your good offices in this instance, - and instance which covers my wish to give them a Christmas gift and failed to do, - the whiskey that I could upon having to be dispensed with in another direction. I shall put their address on an accompanying sheet so that the store might send the item direct to them. I haven't the slightest notion as to how much the table costs. If the store would send it to me C. O. D. that would be grand. If it must be paid for before being shipped, I should so much like to send you the money. I feel lout-ish writing you concerning this delightful object, and yet - can think of nothing that would so well delight both husband and wife and at the same time express my appreciation for the medicine and attention bestowed by them upon me during the past year.

If you can think of some way to handle this matter so that you will not have to make a trip down town and so that I may forward the money, then the item might go direct to Mr. and Mrs. Donal Worsley, Cloutierville, Louisiana, - with the address repeated on the attached sheet.

Will you forgive me for thus imposing upon your generous nature and your precious time.....

Today Louisiana voted. Fortunately we got none of the 8 inch snow fall that Shreveport received yesterday. What with things green along the roadside and the weather in the mid 40's, getting to the polls was pleasant enough. Dan took the Madam and me to Montrose by way of Derry, - the Montrose lane not being in good order. I was astonished when local politicians assailed our

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care when Dan went into the place to have the books brought out so the Madam could vote without getting out. In most states, I think, it is against the law to electioneer in front of a polling place, but apparently it isn't in Louisiana.

Some hill-billy presented the Madam with a card, saying, "My name is Joe Schlute and I'm running for Police Jury and if you don't mind, I'd be proud if you would vote for me".

The Madam, obviously a little muddled so early in the morning, - it was 9 o'clock, responded: "I came here with the intention of voting for Sam Jones".

Do you think the Governor would love being thus classed with an aspirant to about the lowliest elective job on the ticket.

On my return to "elrose, the postman had arrived, bringing a flock of books, - records, - the title being "Swann's House". I didn't recall having ordered such a thing, and so tried out the first page on my machine. It was little Marcel's Du Cote de chez Swann in French, with but a single side of the record carrying the story. It traveled in the regular library of Congress containers, and bears a return card for the American Foundation in New York, - and not the usual New Orleans card whence come my other books. Obviously the records, - the impress, I believe Miss Smith styled them, are going slap back to Manhattan when I'm finished. Isn't it odd that only mentioned the book yesterday, it should arrive today.

I must confess to you quite frankly that somehow I got the impression from what Miss Smith wrote me that these "impresses" were being sent me to keep, but I am bound to have been mistaken, since the cartons and contents are to be returned. Of course nothing has been heard of from Mr. Barbour's direction. -- Not a peep.

I must answer the enclosed card tonight. The only sister Rachel Field had of whom we knew anything was the one she kept in a private institution. Perhaps Gertrude Roberts Smith is in for a surprise unless there might have been another sister or this one has taken a new lease on the mental department.

So glad you mentioned Dutton's American Society Series, and I shall recommend it to Dora. I'm under the impression the book is likely to catch hold some place or other, and perhaps you have put your finger on the spot. So many things to talk about, - so many things for which I am indebted.....

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color problem

January 21st, 1948.

Memorandum:

So many things to chat about that I might as well start in on Caroline, whose letter I enclose. I think it covers nothing new but varies a little in detail from the last we heard of the Dormons.

I always laugh when Caroline starts complaining about letters. I reckon I have sent her three during the past month. You will notice she admits receipt of one, states that she has been away for half a month-- without letting any prospective correspondent know about it, were one hoping to reach her by post, and then crowns the whole thing by saying she hasn't had more than one letter in a month. I'm just wondering how many letters a month she thinks she rates without ever feeling moved to make any response, as for example in regard to the Japanese Live Oaks, etc. Well, none of that matters and you have her letter so you can settle it as I do, - by being interested in the workings of her mind.

I heard a story recently, - based on a problem as old as the hills but with a slightly different twist to it if one were casting about for novel material.

An ever so attractive girl of the Cane River country, mulatto of blood but white-white in pigmentation, sought and found employment in Alexandria sometime during the war boom. A white man fell in love with her, and disdained the racial consideration to which she subscribed at the inception of the friendship.

Then some disagreeable person in town, learning that she was being courted by a white man, - I'm sure it must have been one of those discontented society bags, - denounced the situation and the girl and succeeded in getting her chased out of town.

The girl accordingly returned to the Cane River country and for some reason, it was impossible for her boy friend to come to see her. Time dragged on, and despairing of ever seeing him again, she began going with a colored boy, - either dark mulatto or negro. Things went along nicely for some time and their relationship became ultra intimate.

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Then, to the girls delight, her former friend was able to re-establish contact with her and got a job in a nearby community so that he might continue the courtship with a view to marriage, - but with plans to live somewhere in the North where their happiness couldn't been smashed a second time.

It was close upon the heels of the white youth's return from oblivion that the poor girl presented herself to a local physician and pronounced those fateful words: "I've missed".

Well, the lady doctor had to explain to the girl that it was impossible for her to undertake anything for her in such an instance. The girl, already dejected, was thrown into a nervous state that would wring anyone's heart. It seems the girl having been loved by the white man never wanted to be wooed by a mulatto, and in her despair in being chased from Alexandria and cut off from the first love, decided she would only associate with a colored boy, - a negro, since society had chastized her for following her first impulse. And so here the poor thing is facing the prospect of begetting a child of midnight hue and of course losing her first love for ever, - unless.....

It certainly would be nice to enjoy the emoluments of a physician but it certainly wouldn't be so pleasant having to decide about the legal aspects of the law, Christian charity and human compassion. Off hand, it would seem as if any girl's cup of misery would be sufficiently filled when confronted by the prospect of having a fatherless child, but adding the color problem to ruin a romance already snatched back from destruction is really too much. Humanity in general and individuals in particular can certainly jockey themselves into the strangest situations, and God alone knows the answers, I guess, and the solutions, if any.

Lesiurely Louisiana is still counting ballots cast in yesterday's election and a run-off will be necessary, it seems, to determine if Sam Jones or Earle Long will be elected Governor on Feb. 24th. Of Parish candidates, most of the hill-billy crooks up for re-election, lost out. This will not especially please J. H., since he always used them to get what he wanted. But I'm quite sure he also bet on the other candidates, too, so that he will still effect his wishes, regardless of results at the polls. And just to think that an abortion is illegal.

Well, so it goes and I shall now turn to my Christmas records and read a line before folding up, - and that will do me good.....

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Remarque's "Arch of
Triumph"

January 22nd, 1948

Memorandum:

Today was sunny and warm. At sundown, the Western sky was a veritable "Twilight of the Gods", - with great wisps of gauze-like clouds, some all pink, some all gold, with a reflected brilliancy that cast shadows from West to East. The back drop out-Prussianed satin, dyed a Prussian blue

I stood gazing at it for a long time, wishing the while I had someone to share it with. Well, in a way I did, for between me and this somewhat ~~xxx~~ gaudy setting stood the dark leafless branches of a big old crepe myrtle, with white-white Say-rah surveying the world and me from such a colorful vantage point.

Before I had reluctantly turned away, a light ground breeze came stealing along from the East, a vague chill mixed with its balminess. I consulted the radio which declares the thermometer will dip to 14 or 15 within the next few hours. It's difficult to imagine but I am glad I got some plants in the ground at Arenbourg this afternoon. Some white crepe myrtles arrived from Mobile, - excellent looking stems, but rather meager in root system. I planted them in Unit No. 2, and so what there is of their feet is save from the approaching cold wave.

I finished Arch of Triumph and found it good. I think Remarque might have stressed one point a little more, although it may be an opinion drawn from my imperfect reading rather than any flaw in the telling of the story. I believe it was the author's intention to portray a German surgeon of average Teutonic racial status, who through his fidelity to former associates who had rescued him from death in the first world war, was driven to destruction because he maintained his best qualities in standing by the principals in which he believed. And because of his determination to do so, he found himself a German refugee surrounded by German-Jew refugees, - driven thither and yon in the great

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20th century Exodus of varied humanities, - a bewildering migration without a Moses.

As for the book's title, one might assume, I suppose, that it derives from the fact that much of the action centers about the Etoile. I have no idea what the author had in mind, but if he had stressed one point a little stronger, one might find in the chief character that superb arch that stretches across the time between Germany's pinnacle of culture, slap across the chasm of the Nazi depths, with a suggestion and a promise that it will extend to such a time point as to again reach ground when the old and real values and cultures are restored once more.

In all national convulsions, a few people, like Arches of Triumph, inevitably stretch their arc of humanity and restraint over the troubled period. What to me is one of the political wonders of the world is the unusually large number of such arches that extended themselves over the American revolutionary period, - Washington, Adams, Jefferson and so on. In slightly different curves da Vinci might be observed as a classic example during the Renaissance chaos, Goethe during the Napoleonic period and so on. I find myself thinking that Mr. Remarque's hero might have loomed even larger, had various literary search lights been trained on certain of these historic parallels.

But I am turning this note into a "literary evening", and you must pardon me for letting the momentary concern over a littlerary piece get the better of my sense of proportion.

Tonight's radio indicates the Secretary Marshall addressed the members of the Cotton Council in Atlanta, which H. H. is attending. J. H. always complains that "all they do is talk" in those meetings, so I'm not sure if he will be especially delighted with today's program, - especially as he inclines toward the Senator Taft-Herbert Hoover concepts of economic aristocracy, typifying that school of Alexander Hamilton who firmly believed that power, - political and economic, - should rest in the hands of and be operated by them, for their own benefit, with the crumbs falling from the tables of the rich in sufficient quantities to keep the poor and underprivileged alive.

Well, Lord, all this talk, and not touching upon half a dozen things I intended. But tomorrow, as Scarlett might remark, is another day....

0875

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January 23rd, 1948.

Memorandum:

To hand the joint letter including Mrs. Roosevelt's clipping, plus your elegant three page letter to me. I need not tell you how much all these items have enchanted me, and I should add that the Madam was delighted with her share, too.

It has been a day for staying in an getting the most from the printed word, for weather conditions haven't been conducive to excursions into "plain air".

It began showing about 7 a.m., and I suppose 4 or 5 inches fell. The green landscape has been obliterated by a substantial coating of white, and tonight's brilliant moon has turned buildings like the African House and its residence into a veritable "winter wonderland".

But all this beauty isn't enough to satisfy, for after all, it is only snow deep, and not worth all the shivering and freezing it drives into the souls of your colored friends. But all day the butaine has been functioning perfectly and groped about it, we have been "wedged out", all my colored friends, with only me to vaguely suggest Snow White and the 7 giants, reduced to dwarfishness by the cold.

Going back to Mrs. Roosevelt's account of a day at Hyde Park with Joseph Daniels, I must say I think the piece a good example of her artistic use of the pen. It makes me wonder how soon her book covering the White House years will appear. There was one name which may or may not have appeared in notices covering Mr. Daniels' death, - that of Mrs. Kate Highsmith. I used to know the lady quite well and admired her tremendously. Curiously enough I don't recall at the moment her maiden name by which she was called while confidential secretary to Mr. Daniels. We were quite good friends, too, and the failure of my memory seems to be more odd since I didn't know her so intimately following her change of name. I received an invitation to her wedding to John Highsmith, to take

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place in Raleigh, North Carolina in June or July of the mid 1920's, but I was on the verge of a jaunt to Alaska when the invitation arrived, and so I merely sent along a gift. In the mean time, of course, I have forgotten her address, but possibly a letter to Raleigh would be sufficient address to reach her.

I am writing old X. P. Smith, recommending "Proud Destiny" by Leuchtswangler for recording. I certainly shall push that item, although pushing old X. P. has something as futile about it as trying to push a ball of quick silver. But I'll keep on trying regardless. Up to now I think my score of successes on recommendations stands at precisely naught.

In further reference to The Queen's Necklace, I recall a very interesting book, usual French novel size, but illustrated, which covered the case very completely. I think it was entitled "Collier de la Reine", or some such. I had a copy, - Heaven knows where it is now, and as I recall, I saw one at Pierre's shop a long time back. One illustration that interested me very much was a sketch of the necklace itself. Somehow I had always been under the impression that it was like a dog collar, but the sketch revealed a longer rope that would rest on the upper chest, with graduated sun-bursts in design. It is my understanding that Mme. de Valois, - or whoever the arch criminal in the business was, took the treasure to London where it was broken up and the individual stones sold piece meal.

I think Damas wrote a novel on the subject, but I can't recall if it had much value. I do recall his Memoires d'un Medecin, which dealt with the same period, and, as I recall, had many of the chief characters in its pages. The names of the jewelers who were swindled still remain in my memory as totally unsuited for people plying their trade. I don't remember the spelling, - something like Boehmer and Bossange, but that I should have remembered any suggestion of their names probably stems from the fact that when I first encountered them, it seemed more appropriate to me that such a team should have been manufacturers of steel girders or captains of heavy industry rather than artistic creators of royal diadems. So do non-essentials clutter up one's memory and mind.

And now I must turn to A la Recherche du temps perdu and a chapter in the Bible, and thence to sleep...

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January 26th, 1948.

Memorandum:

First off, I should like to mention one or two phases of the national and international outlook, as glimpsed through a chat with J. H. yesterday on his return from the Cotton Council meeting at Atlanta.

There were two addresses by Secretary Marshall, - one formal speech, poorly delivered but adequately reported by the press. The second one was an informal chat, - and strictly off the record. In both talks, the Secretary stressed the danger to Western hemisphere nations, should the proposed European Recovery Plan not be adopted to stave off Bolshevism in what remains of Europe and European colonies not already under Kremlin domination.

Credits for European and Japanese purchases meet with favor from J. H., I gather. It seems there is no cotton carry-over this year, although I had supposed there was still something like a twelve million bale surplus. I don't know what the European demand for raw cotton may be, but I understand from J. H. that General MacArthur reports an urgent need for three million bales to keep the Japanese mills from shutting down and throwing the mill workers on to American relief. Naturally the cotton farmers favor an immediate granting of the desired materials to Japan.

J. H. has known P. K. Norris for years. Norris, I believe, has had some of his articles on Europe printed in the Saturday Evening Post. I was surprised to learn that, following the Marshall outline of his program, Norris told J. H. he was just back from Europe, that the Europeans would eventually get along without American funds and that in his opinion, not one cent should be voted by Congress for the Recovery Plan. So much for Mr. Norris and his ideas, which, I suspect, neatly parallel J. H.'s ideas, - all save the "cotton for Japan" part.

According to J. H., the leading business men and politicians feel that the funds requested of Congress for carry out the Marshall plan, would maintain continued prosperity in the United States until after election, - possibly for longer, after which would come a depression. Many of the big business

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men and a number of Republican politicians think it would be better for them, - and therefore for the country, if the Marshall Plan funds were not voted, so that a depression would begin almost immediately. That would guarantee the 1948 election to the Republicans, and while J. H. do sn't believe that his favorite candidate, - Senator Taft, could get the nomination, there is always a chance that the Senator could wield sufficient influence with the next Republican President to short-circuit a lot of the Roosevelt advantages for the common man, and thus put Government and Economics back into the hands of the Republican big shots of the Cooledge and Hoover era.

I need not confess to you, for you already know, that I am opposed to practically all of Mr. Taft's theories in Government and that I am prejudiced unfavorably by his radio personality. But aside from these two factors, I must say I gasp at the blind stupidity and disdain of human needs and rights when I consider how mightily Mr. Taft and his associates will gamble with the welfare and obvious needs for subsistence emanating from Europe and approaching a chasm in this country.

Surely there is nothing like a sense of humor to keep things in perspective, and I'm so glad we both could the better adjust our sense of relativity by hearing B. Lillie last Sunday on the Fred Allen show. I thought her "I am the Queen of Nicotine" was elegant, and before her new show runs out, I hope she will do a return to the air under the same auspices.

I think you have a snapshot of my semi-cloistered back gallery. I wish you might have had a look at the place during the last couple of days. St. Francois d'Assisi, for one, would have been jealous of my fine collection of Blue Jays, Cardinals, Warblers and Mocking Birds, dining there in great style, against the white back drop of snow on the lawn beyond. Blue jays are birds that scarcely recommend themselves to me for fattening, they are all such Senator Tafts, but at the moment when food for feathered friends is scarce, they behave a little less pugnaciously, and if they don't the Mocking birds are their equal, inspiring them to attend to their own business and leave the Cardinals and warblers alone. The moon is up at this hour, and the smaller birds are all in bed, but from where I sit, I can see my friend, the little old screech owl, tugging at an apple, and both of us are liking it...

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*About Aunt Cammie's
state of health*

January 26th, 1948.

Memorandum:

To hand two weather reports, - one in your letter of today, remarking the presence of plenty of evidence of your huge snow fall of a couple of weeks back, and a second report, - from the Columbia net work, reporting another 12 inch cascade of snow over the Metropolitan area. You, poor you....

But I'm hoping you may have some of our luck, for this morning it started sprinkling, and during the afternoon the sun peeped out for a little while: -net result, - no more snow. But, I am glad to add that in spite of the rapid change of the landscape from white to green, my assortment of Blue Jays, Cardinals and Mocking Birds continue in full force on my back gallery.

Surely you must agree that the Book Worm has a fixation of Mr. Kane. The latest quotation from that facile pen surpasses anything yet. I wonder if it wouldn't floor the Book Worm if news seeped through that Mr. Kane's reputation in the South is but definitely on the down grade. And yet, in spite of this, you will note from the enclosed clipping that he readily makes the news print in these parts. I know Dr. Taylor and shall write him, remarking the while that it is fortunate the Howard-Tilden Library doesn't possess Mr. Kane's first working draft instead of his final one, since the first working draft would too closely reproduce the stuff Mr. Kane lifted from my house.

I intended thanking you in yesterday's Memorandum for your kindness in sending me the particulars regarding the numerous individuals whose papa was a test tube. I was astonished that there should be some twenty thousand of these people with such strange geneological tables. Of course somebody will be stirring up a story for the pulp sheets before long, showing what odd things transpired in the life of the hero or heroine when it was discovered after a quarter of a century that the administering doctor reached for the wrong serum when impregnating the mother. At least neither the father nor mother can lay the resulting child on the moonlight or whatever.

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On the big house beam, I saw J. H. tonight after supper. He asked me if I didn't think his mother's mind was deteriorating fast. I told him I thought it was. All day long she had persecuted poor Aurellia, having been goaded early in the morning by Sam Brown, a clever rascal who knows exactly how to get the Madam heeled into a tnatrum. The odd part of the set up is that Dan Henry thinks Sam Brown made the world and set it turning. At the same time he dislikes Aurellia and in times past, perhaps six months ago, asked the Madam to fire her. It is impossible to tell J. H. the cause of the Madam's frame of mind, for J. H. tells everything he knows, and since it is better not only for me but for the Madam, it is better that I say nothing to J. H. as to the cause of the difficulties, since Dan and I couldn't occupy the same plantation if we were thrown into armed camps over this point. As the Madam heads into mental uncertainty, she certainly needs Aurellia more than ever, and yet because of the mental quirk, she appears to be doing all she can to drive Aurellia out. All this manifestation of dislike, naturally, is nothing more or less than frequently happens in such men al cases when the patient frequently turns against those on whom the patient is most fond and most dependant upon. But the process of getting over the shoals is difficult, and one never knows when a brain storm may reach hurricane proportions and the patient fall out in a stroke.

The writing of these details perhaps makes the situation seems worse than it is in reality. But I write them regardless, thinking you would like to be kept informed as to how the wind blows.

I was floored by your memory in its having sounded a bell when striking the name of Whitfield Jack. I think it perfectly remarkable that having heard the name but a single time and months ago, - and to no particular point, that you should have retained a space for it in your mind.

Your report on the uncertainty as to how one may reach Anita gives me a feeling that I may have heard from her recently, - not heard, but may have received something from her, - I mean to say that she may have intended I receive a line, but I haven't. And the same thought occurs to me regarding Nives. I haven't heard from her in ever so long, - in fact, you have long since received whatever that communication may have been. I didn't hear from her at Christmas time, and I'm wondering if you may have done so. Poor Nives.....

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Dooreus 1/2/48

January 27th, 1948.
Memorandum: For the record, I have no special life to me - I am a man of the world.

The enclosure speaks for itself. That Dr. K. Rand should have quoted me to the Camelia Society was a surprise because I didn't even know the Society was in session.

Did you ever hear the old saying that shoemakers children never have shoes. I may cite a case in point. In Natchitoches lives a Mr. Johnson, wealthy in many lines of endeavor, real estate, hotels, insurance, etc. It is from him that Dan Henry, also in the insurance business, rents his apartment in town. Last night the building burned up around 2 a.m. Dan saved a few clothes, but lost most of his other effects, including some silver service recently purchased, watch, etc., etc. The point of the episode is that neither Mr. Johnson nor Dan carried any insurance. Don't you think that is something.

Last night I heard the last act of the Lux Radion program, and was interested at curtain call to hear Miss Bergman say she is currently cast in Remarque's Arch of Triumph. I am glad to hear they are making a movie of the book, but I can't imagine how it could be reproduced on the screen, with with the chief character being able to get away with murder and so many of the sidelights depending on "filles de joie" and the like. I shall be curious to learn from you eventually when you have seen the film, so that I may learn just how Hollywood gets around such business. Perhaps, as in other cases, they will merely use the title and let the story go.

The weather man reports that an ice sheet from Dallas, Texas to Monroe, La., has tied up all traffic. Monroe is only a hundred miles or so from here, and I hope the electric cables, serving this area, that come from that town, aren't broken down, as they were last year, leaving us for a week without radio, reading machine, water, light, etc. And just for a parting shot, the weather bureau, in making the dire predictions for tonight's blast, remarked that a year ago today the thermometer stood at 80. Lord, Lord.

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More and more I find myself fishing about in the ether waves, while waiting for some particular program, just to see what the crack-pot Bible-slappers are up to in the "Department of Theology. I really heard an original thought the other night, and originality is so unusual, - and of all places on such programs, that I must report my findings. I know not the denomination of the speaker but he was going away at a great rate ~~in~~ about the infallibility, - with one "I" probably of the Bible. But, to my astonishment, he did admit that there was one error in the Bible, due to what slip, he did not explain. He quoted John 1:11 - 16: "For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son....." Now in that line appears the great error of the Bible, for, according to the preacher, Jesus was not God's only Son, but in reality was God's second Son. To be quite honest about it, I had never given the statement much thought, and so I was curious to learn the details. Well, it seems that six thousand years before the birth of Jesus, - 6,000 years, mind you, God begot Himself a Son, - which seemed like quite a gap between off-spring. The first Son's name, - of course you have already guessed it, was Adam. Well, come to think of it, I couldn't argue the man down in my own mind, - except there was some grave doubts in my mind as to the precise birth date of Adam, which, according to my untutored mind, I had somehow supposed to have been a little earlier. But what was disturbing to me was the fact that the program itself began to fade out at this point, and just as the preacher was beginning to raise the point as to why, in the case of his first Son, God contrived Adam without human aid, whereas, in the case of His second child, Jesus, assistance was sought in the case of.....

I used to wonder who in the world listened to these rattle-brained bigots. In myself, I am beginning to find out, but even more I'm beginning to wonder where in the world come such an assortment of fanatics and how on earth they contrive to make the air waves.

There seems to be another book out, a novel, having to do with Natchez-under-the-hill and Louisiana. Charles Mazurette sent the Madam a copy bearing an inscription by the author: "To Aunt Cammie of Melrose Plantation, from Lyle's friend, Dalton Raymond". I never heard of the man, but at supper tonight J. H. told me that Dalton Raymond was in L. S. U. when he and Stephen were in school. Mr. Dalton's papa owned the biggest department store in Baton Rouge, it seems. I forgot to mention the title of the book, - "Earthbound", and I guess it isn't so much.....

1083

Dona 1/2/48

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January 28th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Even as in your neighborhood, our local weather continues topsy-turvy. The thermometer sags lower in Louisiana as it climbs higher in North Dakota, while a drizzle and sleet makes working at Arenbourg unpleasant. I got some trees and bushes cut below the terrace today, but with the weather below freezing and everything so dampish, I got no great satisfaction out of my accomplishments.

I enclose a couple of bits of correspondence, although you will miss nothing if you skip reading them for they hold no particular interest.

It is pleasant to report that my patient is right side up again in the mental department.

There is one advantage in the present inclement weather, - the fact that it offers me an excuse to remain indoors more than usual, and thus whack out much over-due correspondence. In thanking Miss Myra for her nice letter, I mentioned the exchange of courtesies between Madame de Campan and Madame Vigee-Lebrun, as mentioned by the latter, you may recall, in her Memoires, - if you chanced to read the edition containing the episode. The cases are not parallel but the fact that the former had kind things to say in Paris about the latter while absent in Russia was sufficient excuse to bring up the Memoires which I wanted to call to Miss Myra's attention. Miss Myra is genuinely interested in European culture as is evidenced by her books of foreign imprint and some of her fine prints, hanging in the drawing room at Devereux, prints that include a couple of real fine ones of Versailles. I believe she has spent some time on the Continent and would probably find much to excite her own memory in glancing through Mme. Vigee-Lebrun's volume. And while on the subject, I must remark how odd it seems to me that I have never found two editions of her works in English that covered exactly the same points. I assume the original publication must have been in French, although I don't recall ever having seen it listed. Obviously the English and American editions, - if there were ever an American, - must have been

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abridgements of the French edition, since they are not identical, - the editions in English. Should you find yourself in the catalogue room of the Public Library some day, it might be interesting to see if a French edition is listed, - and in how many volumes. One example of the variations in the editions in English came to my attention when I was searching for material on Marly. In my examination of one volume, I found no mention at all of the place. I glanced through another edition, which appeared to cover the very same material, - so far as chapter headings went, only to discover on further examination, that the second edition in one particular chapter, - rather toward the end, contained several references to Marly, but omitted several paragraphs on some other subject from the same chapter, as covered by the other. I recall that in both instances, there was nothing to indicate in either edition that anything had been omitted from the original text.

Although we have no snow in this section, the local radio stations continue to announce the closing of schools for the balance of the week because of the icy conditions obtaining on all highways. People are urged not to get into the big road except in emergency. But in spite of these warnings, J. H. headed out for New Orleans this afternoon, Pat going with him part way, with a view of heading out for Beaumont which he hoped to reach before nightfall. Shreveport is cut off from communication with East Texas while Arkansas seems cut off from everywhere, what with electricity being out in many places through that area. I pause to knock wood, as I report that up to now, our current has remained intact.

To remark upon the disappearance of a shadow of anyte bellum flavor from many a local cabin, I must report that the wiring of various cabins for electricity goes along with considerable speed. Ezra and Fugabour seem to be the chief electricians. the occupant of the individual cabin secures the materials at cost from the Melrose store. Ezra and Fugabour charge the cabin occupant three dollars a day, each, for their labor. As most of the cabins are of the "shot-gun" type, - two or three rooms, one behind the next, and only one room wide, the whole job can be accomplished usually in one day, bringing the labor cost to but six dollars, which seems remarkably inexpensive. A year ago, as I walked the river roads, I never saw other than the dim shimmer of coal oil, - kerosene, - lamps. Before Spring is here, the whole length and breadth of the place will be a great big Mazda luminary, I suppose, - and hope Thus passes the shadow of darkness.....

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2802 re: Talking Books.
Letter to Library of
Congress

January 29th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Even as in your neighborhood, so is it in ours, - the weather is one great big misere.

It has sprinkled all day, with each rain drop turning to ice on touching anything. The bamboo hedge, normally maintaining a 30 wall of green at the far end of the white garden, has sagged 10 or 15 feet while the red berries of the nandina hedges, usually the size of a pea, now stand forth clumsily in cakes of ice, each individual berry in the cluster of hundreds, looking like a fat cranberry.

At Arenbourg, the little grandiflora magnolias look like drunken dwarfs, each weighted down with a few pounds of ice, for every broad flat leaf is coated by a glassy ice covering about an inch in thickness. The weather man promises gradual warming processes on the morrow. Plant and man are both ready for the innovation.

The political campaign drones along much as usual with a ripple appearing on the surface this evening when Jimmy Morrison, a loosing contender in the recent primaries, unexpectedly threw his supposet to Sam Jones. Everyone declares that Morrison is a clown and a crook, and for him to suddenly embrace the conservative and respectable Sam Jones faction brings forth the inevitable remarks about the strangeness of political bed fellows. Obviously the Long party is made up of cheap ward healers and too many no-account hill-billies who just do manage, - like Long himself, to keep a fraction of an inch beyond the arm of the Law, and it would accordingly seem as though the Morrison crowd would feel more at home with such a group. I am greatly interested to notice how many of my friends of color express the hope that Long may win. I suppose this stems in part from the quasi-canonization of the late Huey P., and it is remarkable that that prize hill billy by some miracle never did stir up racial animosity during his tenure. I believe

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the primary point around which the backers of Long revolve is Hot Oil. I understand Hot Oil to be whatever oil is pumped and sold over and above the limit placed on annual pumping by either the State or Federal government. During Huey's time and later during Earle Long's 12 months in office, a scandalous amount of Hot Oil was produced, netting the politicians extraordinary graft, since, because it was produced outside the Law, it was tax exempt and illegally sold, bringing in profits to everyone except the State and the people, - hot oil money being the basis of much of the well, it is said, that is currently putting up the million dollars to elect Mr. Long, so the grab can be carried out again. By some twist of things, the voters of this Parish, preponderately hill billy, voted down all the local officials plying their wares under the Long banner, but gave Long himself a majority of their votes, from which I deduce that a close view of these scoundrels is less enchanting than a l(Long) view.

To increase the number of Talking Books on scientific, technical and subjects of limited appeal, interruption, - I don't recall if I finished the above sentence. --the point I have in mind, however, is for the Library of Congress or the Foundation, or some such organization, to petition or recommend or suggest to a million societies of a million particular groups in various fields, to set aside sufficient money whenever the particular Society brings out a volume, so that this especial fund may be turned over to the Foundation or Printing House for the Blind, in order that the pet manuscript may automatically be included in the Library for the Blind, and so not leave the book unprinted because the Library of Congress is restrained from devoting its funds to anything but books of general appeal.

I have made a rough draft of this suggestion which I enclose under separate cover in order that you may glance through it. I was interrupted several times while dashing off the letter, so I'm not sure I made my point clear. I was a little mad, too, when writing the letter, having so often been put off by the Library of Congress so far as a definite answer to any request was concerned. Perhaps that part should be eliminated and the letter turned around a little, the last coming first, and the first removed completely. I shall appreciate your opinion on two points if you care to give it, - 1st, - is the idea good, and second, can the draft be used if turned about a little, or should a completely new approach be turned out.....

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January 30th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Your nice fat envelope of Tuesday, together with its equally elegant letter and the wonderful notes from Frederike Zweig's book, so I need not hasten to tell you what delights I have enjoyed today.

I am frankly not surprised at the characteristically tactful way you handled the reading table business, and I accept the Arenbourg angle wholeheartedly, leaving me filled to the brim with gratitude to you for all the delicate ways you handled the whole business. I am sorry you had to fly down to 57th Street, but I am glad an opening presented itself so that you didn't feel too rushed at the hour selected for the jaunt.

From the store tonight, I learned that "the go-carten" was at Melrose this afternoon, and from the fact that I had not visitor from said vehicle, I figure that your gift may reach them on the morrow. I think they do not write letters, so I reckon they will be passing this way early in the week to acknowledge receipt, and I shall pass the news along to you forthwith. Again my sincerest thanks, and if only I may be able to do something by way of return eventually.

I shiver as I listen to the radio's account of this latest blast of cold weather over the metropolitan area. Poor you. If only your office would suspend the way the Detroit factories and the Louisiana schools are doing until after things thaw out a little.

We were promised a thermometer rise today, but nothing much came of it. An ice storm rather like the one indicated in last January's snapshots continues. The water system is out of order and I remove my beard as best one can with a teacup of hot water and a freezing razor. But tomorrow will be different, I hope.

I didn't finish the 4 pages of notes on Frau "Zweeweg's" volume, and so I have the delicious anticipation of continuing with them on the morrow. I am so

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glad to have the particulars, both personal and literary concerning the famous husband, - and incidentally I appreciate your kindness in reminding me that the name is spelled Stefan. It seems to me I should have remembered that point, but I guess I have written too many times to the General whose first name is Americanized.

Isn't it odd that such a cultivated man, having gone through such a rigorous childhood, should have practiced some of the parental quirks of his own parents when he found himself possessed of a couple of step daughters.

I am enchanted to hear about the portraits found in the Catherine de Medici volume, - the ones of Francois II and Mary Stuart. Do you recall that perfectly pathetic portrait of Mary Stuart, made while Queen of France, by somebody or other and reproduced in one of those Alpina folios. I have a copy of that here and shall get it out and set it before me on my desk for a while. And to digress from the subject of Zweig momentarily, I would mention the fact that one of the best biographies ever written of Catherine de Medici, I believe, is a two volume one by Paul van Dyke. I never read all of it, but found what I did read very remarkable and most excellent. Always terribly maligned by earlier historians because of the St. Bartholomew's Massacre, it remained for van Dyke to bring her portrait into better focus, and I think he did a masterly job. I think she should rank along with Elizabeth, Marie Therese, Catherine, etc., as one of the remarkable feminine administrators of Europe.

I was shocked to learn of Gandhi's murder today. Somehow I had never thought of this apostle of non-violence dying violently. I was equally amazed to hear tonight that tonight his dead body was carried out on a balcony, seated in a chair, so that the multitudes on side the New Delhi Building, might view their former leader placed at such a curious situation and in such a strange posture.

But the little skinny brown man had shocked me equally in life, and I guess I should have been prepared for something exceptional in his passing. It was in Europe that I saw him, - I guess along about 1924, although it may have been earlier or later. A big Empire conference was scheduled for that summer and Gandhi, then enunciating his "back to nature and handicraft" theories, was one of the most striking personalities to journey to London. I chanced to be passing a public building, - it seems to me it was the Foreign Office or some such, when a beautiful big robin's egg blue Rolls-Royce slid along the pavement to a sedate stop and out of it descended the M

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the Mahatma, clad in nothing but what seemed to be diapers, and leading a big old long haired goat behind him. The Mahatma's ribs were so prominent, and his big round glasses so strikingly beetle-like that for the moment I wasn't quite sure if one animal or two had emerged from the magnificently appointed car.

I have often wondered since to whom the car might have belonged, and if the next person to ride in it welcomed the aroma left behind by the old goat.

But I have run over my space and time and so I shall fold up my own goatee at this point. Again my thanks for your kindnesses, for handling the gift for the lady doctor so generously, for all the grand notes, and best of all for the letter which, as always, somehow contrives to bring me a little bit of you.....

As for news, you will miss nothing if you read no further, for it has been a very uneventful week-end, and one much to my liking.

Yesterday, while you all were getting colder and colder, the sun broke out in these parts, and today has been ever so much like Spring. I'm all in favor of that.

There were Pil rims this afternoon who had recently run down to Louisiana from Montana, - to get away from Winter. I guess the past week must have made them feel right at home. They were delightful and asked me if I knew anyone in that state. The only people I ever knew were the Clarks, whom they chanced to know. I was sorry to learn that the brother of one of my good friends of some years back, had recently been killed in an air accident.

019 I can't recall if when in Washington, you had
an opportunity to see the rooms which Mr. Clark left to
that Gallery on his death. One of the rooms, brought
down from his former residence on Fifth Avenue around
72nd Street, contains the famous Boutet de Monvel
pictures of the Life of Jeanne d'Arc, - and they are
quite lovely.

Today's people were "in lumber", and I gathered from the looks of things, as though they might be in possession of many a big old red wood.

A week or so ago, I learned in a round about way that J. H. was planning to go to "drope around the 15th of this month. At dinner today, Pan told me that J. H. has changed his plans, - not of date but direction, and will head South instead of East. Guatemala must be just around the corner. I take it.

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Between 4 and 5 this morning, I heard some excellent musical transcriptions over W. D. S. U. New Orleans. There were many things of Liszt and Chopin things, mostly piano concerto items, and I believe Oscar Levant was the soloist. It certainly was a pleasant opening of a new day. Columbia had something to say about some orchestra during the afternoon that was scheduled to give a lot of Victor Herbert in celebration of his birthday, but I got Pilgrims instead. - Pilgrims and patient. But possibly tonight I shall catch up with another program intent on the same business, or a re-broadcast of this afternoon's concert, which I should very much like to hear.

I got caught up a little with my Scientific reading on Saturday night. - some excerpts from Heinrich hertz which were delightful, even though I didn't comprehend everything that I read. I am still hunting sperm whales in a volume that is excellently written but is read merely because I like to save my Bible for going to bed. Of other books, except a little "arcel", I have nothing at the moment.

On Friday night, I tuned in on one of my Bible blappers, this one happened to be Sam Morris, San Antonio, Texas. He is a rapid prohibitionist. He declared the 2nd World War was a visitation of God's wrath on President Roosevelt for having repealed the 18th Amendment. He further declared that both the President and Mrs. Roosevelt had further defied God by enticing people into the dance halls, "to tom-cat around" deceiving people by telling them they only wanted them to give some money for Warm Springs, whereas they were actually in league with the Devil to whom they were trying to sell the souls of good American citizens. Isn't that wonderful. I can just picture F. D. R. roaring over that one.

What with the nice warm sun on Saturday, I sat on my front gallery and let Beau "ack out my hair. He is a big old rough tractor driver and twists my head and neck around as though he were cranking up a Greyhound bus. But he cuts hair alright, always preferring me to sit in a low chair so that he, by resting on his knees, may bring his head and arms even with my perruque. A snap shot of "us-es", thus engaged, really ought to be quite entertaining for the owners of the Terminal Barber Shops.

You see, I was right when I warned you this letter wasn't going to be any good.....

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February 2nd, 1948. A very pleasant surprise to me was the fact that the groundhog saw his shadow in these parts, and while that may portend six more weeks of winter, there was nothing about the balmy atmosphere and sunshine hereabouts that suggested another go-round, and I shall be content with this delightful spring-like situation just as long as it lasts.

Memorandum:

Well, the groundhog saw his shadow in these parts, and while that may portend six more weeks of winter, there was nothing about the balmy atmosphere and sunshine hereabouts that suggested another go-round, and I shall be content with this delightful spring-like situation just as long as it lasts.

Of all the unlikely things on earth, I have been reading the remarkable French mathematician, - Henri Poincare, and more remarkable still, - liking him. He was speculating on the mind, - or minds, - possessed by everyone, - the conscious one that records, notices or fails to do these things, and the other mind, the subconscious one, that by some mysterious process, seems to be able to sort out, retain and reject vast quantities of things the first mind has considered, - and by properly (properly) selecting and combining the thoughts and emotions, at last, - and often in most unlike places and circumstances, arrives at something that is really creative and unique, - or even better, self-satisfying to the owner of these two types of mental processes.

It's a subject everyone speculates upon, I guess, but something about which one seldom finds set down in very readable form, - hence my delight with old Raymond's famous cousin.

Today's post brought a letter from the General without much news, although there was an account of "booby" freezing water pipes in the Baton Rouge area, and some rather discouraging remarks about the dubious outlook for any kind of a settlement with the John A. Lewis forces regarding impending wage contracts at Ethyl. I take it the oil industry must be a segment of the United Lines "orkers, although I hadn't realized it before, and merely guess at it now. The news from little Stephen in Germany continues to be couched in a rosy glow, so far as that youth goes. It seems, in fact, that he has been sent on missions twice to the Russian zone so I take it, he must be getting around. I think his mother continues to fear he will marry the wrong girl, -

2810

an air hostess on some American line instead of the financially attractive daughter of some General Motor official. Free, white and over 21, it would seem as though the youth should be permitted to make up his own mind, but I suppose his mama can't bring herself to realize that her off-spring is xx well beyond the swaddling clothes age.

Last night at 10:30, I discovered the historical program, Columbia Was There, or whatever, being re-broadcast over KWKH, Shreveport, a very clear station in this area. And so I got a very clear picture of the circumstances surrounding the appearance and destruction of the Spanish Armada in the English Channel around about 1782. I'm so sorry we both had to miss the Burr-Hamilton duel, but I'm from here on out, perhaps one or the other of us catch up with future items in this series.

Piece meal, I continue to learn something more about J. A.'s impending jaunt. It is reported that Guatemala is the first stop by air from New Orleans, and thence to some of the successive little countries on down as far as Panama. My guess is that Guatemala will get the major share of his time.

The recent cold seems to have had a variety of effects on my menagerie. The airdale and the dachshund turn up their noses at the fine prepared food I set out for them. I'm told they are dining on beef, a cow having recently been struck on the highway by a car and left where she landed. Say-rah appears listless and without energy, and I'm trying warm milk in an attempt to thaw her out. As for the aviary section, a fine big yellow breasted wood-pecker has joined by back gallery assortment. I was perfectly enchanted when I pointed the new-comer out to Peter, asking him if he had any idea what kind of a bird it might be. He responded promptly: "Us-es-calls-it-a pecker-wood", and I am quite content to let "us-es" have it that way.

Bluff's chickens are still worrying me, having scratched away most of the cotton hulls from the magnolias and gardenias at Erenbourg, but in spite of that, the crop plants seem to have come through the ice storm alright. I Bluff doesn't know it, but he and I are going to have a very serious conference about the matter, and if it doesn't produce definite results in favor of Erenbourg, his particular brand of feathered friends are in for some shortening of their life expectancy. Heigh-ho and lack-a-day....

2811

February 3rd, 1948.

Memorandum:

At long last, - and to my infinite delight, I have, - for the first time, - completed your wonderful notes on Frederike Zweig.

I cannot begin to tell you how much I appreciate your industry in my behalf in undertaking all this work, and one reason why I cannot begin to tell you is because I am too filled with admiration for you as I glance back over the assortment of pages and reflect upon how nobly you accomplished the abridgement. Condensation is among the greater Arts, and you have brought the whole business down to a perfect jewel which scintillates within the circumstances of my grasp, to which added shafts of odd lights have been added by my Ethiopian and his "Zeeweeg" business.

I can well imagine how enchanted you were in going over the original. Picture for yourself that I am equally so, - in going over your rendition in abridged form. With the back-drop of The World of Yesterday in mind, your characters played out their roles so clearly that it was almost as though I were re-reading Stephan's volume with a few additional pages sprinkled through the volume.

From your notes, I gain the impression that the first Frau Zweig must be quite a wonderful person. Wouldn't it be nice to know her. Do you reckon she still lives in the United States. One might drop her a line, I suppose, in care of the publishers.

Surely the lives of all three, - the husband and the two succeeding wives, were extraordinary, - so civilized and for that very reason, probably, the more readily battered about by an unkind Fate. I think I remarked in a previous letter that Stephen never mentioned the name of either wife, and only remarked that he had a first wife after discoursing on events and travels that must have transpired years after their wedding had been effected. Frankly, I'm afraid she got cheated a little, so far as his pen is concerned. But it would seem that his delicacy of design is matched by her strength.

2812

and "larger other eyes", - so that everything comes out in balance, - and especially since Time gave her an extra deal, enabling her to carry out in detail some of the vaguer tracteries which he had skimmed over.

The pleasure your notes have afforded me seems to make any other item appended to this Memorandum altogether trite and grossly out of harmony. But I shall mention one or two particulars, in order that you may be kept informed of coming events that cast their shadows before.

Through a chance telephone conversation today, I learned that Eugene Lavespere, the Melrose clerk, is being married tomorrow night, and plans to live in town where his bride works in the Court House. I believe, although I think they will not make that building their residence, as my faulty sentence might imply. This place of residence, - Matchitoches, - will have but slight effect on the local set up, - he will drive back and forth in his car - but it is true that he has occupied a room on the ground floor of the big house, 10, these many years. It merely means the Madam is a little more isolated in one way, although her section of the house was always so remote from his that he never would hear her, even when home, - which was seldom. He is a Cloutierville number of hill-billy descent, and while I always got along very nicely with him, he never cut any ice in anyone's affections, except possibly Ben's, - and the colored people care not at all for him. Perhaps his stay at Melrose may be altered by his flight into matrimony, and perhaps that is why Teddy Baronowski remains on the plantation staff.

The enclosure speaks for itself, - but I have grown to feel that I am not quite certain of what communications mean from the sender of the enclosed note. Perhaps she is tired, - physically, - and has exhausted all speculations as to where a likely piece of real estate might be considered. A letter from the same lady to the Madam in today's post express a desire to be away from the prevailing cold on the Jersey pallisades, and back again in her cabin on Melrose. Eventually, I reckon, we shall see what we shall see.

My first impulse was to write her, asking her how she would like to travel to Ashville when Spring breaks through, with a view to meeting the Madam there and spending the summer on a mountain peak. But on second thought I realize that the Madam is dizzy and requires support when taking a step, and what with the other lady's difficulty in keeping right-side up, I reckon that as a pair, they wouldn't be so good at mountain climbing together. And I gather from whay you have to d me, that Mrs. G. R. Smith wouldn't be able to lend much physical support....Ah, me...

2813

re: Stefan Zweig

have difficulty themselves in teaching anybody anything.

February 4th, 1948.

The radio speaks of more winter, more snow and more everything bad atmospherically heading for your section. I certainly feel sorry for you, and just so think that it is so warm here that I had to put off my jacket when I headed up the road for a short walk.

Memorandum:
A million times today I have thought of things I would like to chat about with you, but now at 9 o'clock, as I sit down to take up a couple of points I find my mind a hodgepodge, so don't be alarmed if this merely turns out to be not unlike a cross-word puzzle.

Yesterday I intended mentioning the death of the present head of the House of Morgan, Mr. Thomas Lamont. I asked one or two people in the neighborhood to let me know if the obituaries carried the names of any surviving relatives, of whom, I believe, Corlyss Lamont, was one. Vaguely I had an idea that Anne Parish's first husband was some connection of Thomas, a son or nephew, but I'm not sure, and it doesn't matter an iota.

What with your most excellent notes still in mind, and they reminding me of Stephan Zweig's association with Freud both in Vienna and during his final illness in London, I dabbled a little in the great psychologists lectures before folding up my beard last night. It had been so long since I had read him that this re-reading afforded me all the satisfaction of exploring him for the first time. By some contemporaries, I believe, he is already considered out-moded in some respects, but so far as I am concerned, he is still of the first magnitude in his field and so I can enjoy him thoroughly regardless.

What never fails to floor me is the invariable discovery one is forever making of rare and precious people when one opens any page of history, regardless of what century or almost what country. The Zweig idea of teaching less political and military topics along nationalistic lines and instead, teaching the cultural and human aspects of blocks of nations, strikes me as being so wise that its wisdom would be almost too vast to find its way into the somewhat thick craniums of educational potentates who determine what shall be taught in schools, even though such tyrants of the vast

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assortment of School Boards the world over would probably have difficulty themselves in teaching anybody anything.

Well, don't let me get to going on that subject.....

The radio speaks of more winter, more snow and more everything bad atmospherically heading for your section. I certainly feel sorry for you. And just to think that it is so warm here that I had to put off my jacket when I headed up the road for Arenbourg. Every morning I get a very good weather report out of Oklahoma. It is interesting that the cold wave from Canada rolled steadily southward, with the promise of freezing us again today or tomorrow, when, lo! having reached some magical line 75 miles North of Tulsa, the darned thing stopped in its tracks, floundered around a little, hesitated for 24 hours, and then apparently for no good reason, headed off in a North-East direction, leaving us with thermometer readings up and up, - to the point that I haven't even lighted my butane heater all day, and I like the whole business, except the direction the wave took, for most certainly you must have had more than a plenty by this late date.

The newspapers failed to come through today, and only some old catalogue and one returned letter reached us. The letter was one I had sent to Essie Mae and Lois when they were arriving in Natchitoches on the 16th of January. In my letter, I asked them to pass this way and stop over for dinner at least. I said nothing about dinner the day they arrived, assuming they had received my letter, of course, - and assumed that they really felt they must be scampering along. I could be wrong in my assumption, of course, and so I merely put a new envelope around the former one, and sent the thing along, - the original unopened.

Tonight I heard a new commentator reporting the furry stirred up among Southern politicians by Mr. Truman's recommendations for enactment of further Fair Practices Laws. The commentator opined: "Why don't those boys simmer down and realize the Civil War is over". Of course like so many wars, the Civil War succeeded in wrecking a large section of the country, - and settled nothing in to many minds and hearts regarding the racial question. Like too many other wars, it might be compared to an operation performed on the body politic, - an operation that came close to paralyzing the patient from whose vitals the cause of the malady was not removed but was sewn up again, left there to contort the patient for generations. What the patient really needs is a brain - or heart - specialist, - and there appears to be a great scarcity of them....

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a elimes of bawora teg illas I .vjilnup bme type
page or two over the week end, I hope.

February 5th, 1948.

How nice to have your letter, together with the original draft of the letter to the Library of Congress, which arrived in today's post.

It was certainly noble of you to take time out so promptly to share your opinions with me on this matter and to send them along so speedily.

What with the obtaining dampness, I may be able to secure the services of my Ethiopian in the morning before mail time, and if so, I shall have him dictate the draft, omitting the sentence you suggested. I think your reaction to that section is sound. If, however, the present lull in plantation operation should impell my helper to make the most of being "foot-loose and fancy free", - to the point of getting into the big road for a week end frolic, I shall post the original draft in Monday's post, although I should feel more contented to carry out your ideas in the matter.

From the enclosures, you will note that the Worsleys have received your gift. At the time they saw the Madam's, they both chorused the wish to have one, assuming, I guess, that one would be ordered sent. - hence the inquiry in the enclosed letter. I shall write them by the next post that you are the "ady Santa Claus in this instance" and that they will probably not discover an invoice.

I am enchanted that the Worsleys were so much in love with the gadget at first sight, and again I call you noble for having consummated the whole business from start to finish with such deafness and generosity. I wish I might eventually do something for you.

Today's post brought me a rather long-ish book which I imagine, from the title, - I'm going to like. It is a 1945 publication by "Harper", - "Contemporary America" by Harvey Wish, - I don't know the spelling of the author's name but it sounds like that. I think Dorothy Thompson edited the book, which suggests its

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type and quality. I shall get around to sample a page or two over the week end, - I hope.

But I shall not get to it tonight, what with being too sleepy, for I was busy as a bee today, - going around in circles mostly, and cluttering up my day with little nothings, such as finding the family Bible to discover an entry of J. H.'s birth, - for passport details, etc. But I did get in some grand licks at Arenbourg, where cotton hulls were flying and everything surviving the recent blasts of winter were coddled no end. I think we lost no grandiflora magnolias, and having survived last summer's heat and this winter's cold, nothing but God, I guess, will ever kill them, - and I suspect he regards them with favor.

It was Knipmeyer Day, too, and I had to sandwich the doctor in for a sitting with the Madam and a glass of wine. Because he knows nothing about 18th century doings and personalities, I was surprised but glad to hear his enthusiasm for Proud Destiny, which he is currently in the midst of reading. He apparently has a photographic mind, for he spoke of many places he couldn't pronounce but could rattle off correctly by individual letter, - "Auteuil, Marly, Vaudeuil, Beaumarchais and so on. From what he had to say of the contents of the book, I gathered that Louis XVI voiced serious objections to Marie Antoinette's gambling and building expenditures. I'm wondering if this is correct, for it was always my understanding that the King never questioned the lady on such matters, suffering as he did from a pronounced inferiority complex that manifested itself unfailingly in letting her have her own way. I must get after the Library of Congress to put that book on disks.

The Madam has again taken up Raymond's "Earth-bound", and after another try, seems to think she is going to like it. I haven't heard of any review of the item and so far as I know Robert Talant's new book has been reviewed in any local papers. I suppose the latter isn't much, but froth is good for the pulp readers and it may enjoy some popularity.

A letter from your friend, Gertrude Roberts Smith, indicates that she is doing alright, although not too actively. She recently sent the Madam a copy of the magazine, Holiday, - I know not which issue, devoted to North Carolina, which I suppose you may have seen. The Madam enjoyed the pictures and is determined she must head out for that state as soon as there is a hint of Spring in the mountains.....

Mort du Chat

2817

February 6th, 1948.
Memorandum: Today's pattern was dominantly black and white.

With the return of warmer weather, lots of things at Arenbourg began doing strange things. For instance, - and unhappy is the instance, most of the gardenias turned their leaves from green to black, while all but the Louisiana switchcane turned its green feathery leaves to white. Both changes are the results of the big freeze, I suppose. I'm just hoping it doesn't mean death in both cases.

And while on that painful subject, I regret to report Say-rah's passing. Death came during the night, - on the back gallery, the result of poison smart Sam Brown had put out in the old store where Say-rah was wont to pick off a juicy rat now and then.

I had several requests for invitations to the funeral, but because Say-rah and I had been such good friends, I thought a private burial would suit us both the better. Accordingly I contrived a really splendid coffin, - a Pet Milk carton, lined with pale blue tissue, and for upholstery, I made use of a well worn old cushion I had long used in my desk chair. The recent cold snap had reduced the narcissus to nothingness, while somehow the daffodills that flowered yesterday seemed too dripping with sunshine for such an occasion. And so, for want of blossoms, I selected a few elegant clusters of red-red nandina berries, together with the green brozoe of their attendant leaves. This foliage daintily concealed the worn places in the old cushion, and at the same time provided a delightfully warming suggestion as a decorated couch for poor white departed Say-rah. My yellow cat, Dora the airdale, and Charlie, the dachhund, were silent but interested mourners. The cat and the airdale behaved with decorum befitting the occasion, but the dachhund barked most disrespectfully and so Dora chased Charlie away. This diversion somehow terminated the preliminary services, and thereupon, - with the two dogs out of the picture, I transported all

2818

More du Ghat

2818

that remained of Say-rah to the far end of the white garden, - the yellow cat, - as cats invariably do, - walking slap in front of my footsteps. Under the bamboo, and hard by a white pomegranite, we dug a little grave, and gently laid our poor friend away. Later in the morning, the Madam was startled when I announced Say-rah's death, having forgotten Say-rah's identity, - and Aurellia being present shed a couple of tears and complained faintly for not having been permitted to attend the last rites. So passed our little old friend, but long will she remain in our hearts and in her Christmas card, yes, no.

And Bessie went back to the Alexandria hospital today for the scheduled checkup. Ezra took her and the baby this morning, but I know not if they were permitted to return home this afternoon, for I asked Aurellia the other day how Bessie was getting along, and her response was a little confusing to me.

"Bessie, she's doin' alright. But there's a big black place near her navel where they sewed her up, and it's sore-sore and it's black-black, and Bessie, her, she sure do have the fever since that place got black and she ain't got no cold, so excusin' the fever and that big old black spot, she's doin' alright."

So that's that, and the hospital will undoubtedly add appropriate remarks to that summation. I notice the Southern politicians continue to sound off against Mr. Truman's ten point fair practices recommendations. It did no harm for the record that he included recommendation against the Jim Crow segregation policy in the South, but he can never hope to get that section of the Bill enacted into law, and sometimes I think the Southern negroes wouldn't be too pleased if these Jim Crow laws were done away with. Sometimes I must say I envy the negro in his Jim Crow isolation when traveling, for at least he is secure from too close contact with the bill-billy traveler, and perhaps I am only jealous when on occasion I find myself swamped in a public conveyance by a mob of numb-skull crackers, and I gaze with eyes of yearning at the Jim Crow section and am envious that I cannot be traveling with the passengers in that section, well removed from the superiority of the white man as is evidenced by my own traveling companions. I recall once having traveled through the Pocono Mountains with a great big Aunt Jemima as my seat companion, and how wonderful and delightful she was, but in my ignorance, I can't say if she was equally enchanted at what she had to contend with alongside....

2819

2819 Dora 2/8/48

February 8th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Three white people and eight negroes are all the people I have seen today.

For the past 24 hours a wind-whipped dizzle has been falling and the temperature is about 35. I guess nobody is stirring out much, for I never recall having seen so few people in a 24 hour period.

Everything under foot is a-drip, of course, and I am glad because we can stand lots of moisture to make up for last summer's losses and to anticipate an early Spring. Arenbourg will benefit.

Being inside most of the day, I got caught up on some of my correspondence, - a flock of letters to people I don't know but who are forever writing the Madam on one count or another.

I have done some reading, too, from Contemporary America, finding it a good survey of things since around 1900.

I was interested in reading a little about one Daniel Burnham, - I'm not sure of the spelling. He was one of America's prominent architects in the 1880's and 1890's, at the time when Washington, D. C. woke up one morning to sense, - somewhat belatedly, that during the past half century, the town had been growing successively more crummy, - without anyone apparently having taken any notice of the gradual drift in the wrong direction. And so Mr. Burnham was called in and according to the present source book, he turned straight to the original Major L'Enfant Plan, and together with two other prominent architects, he examined various cities abroad, concentrating on Versailles, which, according to this same volume, was the main inspiration of L'Enfant. Somehow I was surprised to read this line, for I had never thought much about Washington and its lay-out having been inspired by the 14th Louis' handiwork. But once so enlightened, I immediately began to comprehend how such a possibility may be so. It was fun to get out a map of Washington to examine and then to turn to an old, old one.

2818

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I have of Versailles which I chance to have with me.
Often enough as I made comparisons, - I need scarcely
tell you, I thought of someone with whom I might
examine these particulars more minutely and like the
business of so doing.

In another portion of the volume, I read that one
reason why three Southern States voted for "prohibition
early in the present century was because many voters
honestly believed that if liquor could be voted out,
drunkenness would be eliminated and therefore there would
be much less danger of racial scuffles. Few, if any,
I guess, anticipated the bootlegger and rum-running.
It is an interesting commentary in this present year of Grace,
that the Natchitoches newspapers weekly report the
City Court calendar, and usually there are about
a dozen cases of "Drunk" or "Drunk and Down", as
further proof, - as though any were needed, that
the dryness of this "arish doesn't obviate the consumption
of intoxicating liquors.

This morning's radio reported the presence of Mrs.
Truman and daughter in New Orleans. Little Miss Truman
was quoted as saying their trip through Mississippi was
very pleasant, that no one had said a word about politics.
She's got something there.

The same news cast quotes the Southern Governors,
meeting in Tallahassee as sending an ultimatum to
the "resident, giving him 20 days or some such, to back
down on his "fair practices pronouncement and admit the
superiority of the whites in the South. That set me
to thinking about something entirely irrelevant. I
have often enough heard people commend segregation on
grounds that negroes have such an unpleasant odour,
without every stopping to think, I suppose, that the
negro may have some such idea about the whites, - and
how much the more when the radio so frequently thunders
out the virtues of Life Boy Soap as a protection against
B.O. If those Southern Governors would only get down
to business and appoint a fact-finding commission to
determine if the superior white or the inferior blacks
have a corner on that problem, they really might be
getting somewhere. Even from this remote distance,
I must confess, I think I sense an evil smell issuing
forth from the general direction of old Florida.

I so much wanted to hear the Romeo and Juliette program
you reported for this evening, but the static wiped out
the whole business. I hope you were lucky.

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Pet + Trianon
built by me de
Poupadour in the
1760's

February 9th, 1948.

Memorandum:

How rich am I, - what with two perfectly elegant I
letters in this morning's post. And how noble of
you to cull out so many particulars to send along to me, -
the Smith letter covering "Swann's House", - which is
marvelously done in French, and for the quotations from
Mme. Vigee-Lebrun, the long list of Zweig's writings,
and all the rest. May I say thanks, thanks, thanks, and
at the same time plead with you not to put yourself to
so much work when other demands on your time is so
heavy.

I agree with you that the withdrawal of Nadine from
even the occasional contact with us seems a bit odd, -
but is no doubt attributable to personal trials, - and
somehow I feel these may be from the home front. You
ask if I ever received the proffered photograph, and I
find myself wondering if I ever told her Yes. I never
did receive one and I can't tell for the life of me if
I ever was courteous enough to ask her for it.

As for myself, I think I shall not initiate further
correspondence. If she cares to write, I shall be
glad to respond, but otherwise I shall let the matter
drop. While I don't have any vast amount of corres-
pondence of my own, what I do write on my own hook added
to that which I knock off for the Madam is sufficient to
give me enough entertainment on this keyboard. I don't
mind telling you, too, that for the most part, I never
found Nadine's letters very interesting. Somehow for
me they reflected an exhaustion and an enervated imagination
which brought very little with them except a reminder of
herself, - pleasant enough, but I really didn't require
a letter to bring forth a mental operation in that direction.

I'm so glad to know about the Zweig book that
reminded you of the abortion problem, mentioned in a recent
letter. And it is so kind of you to offer to let me
borrow it, but I shall have to decline, for I can find
no one to read me anything except my letters. There will
be so many books we shall have to eventually explore and ex-
amine together, don't you think so.

And I'm glad you told me further particulars about

1888

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the Marie-Antoinette and Dr. Franklin conversations at the bask ball. Again I am reminded of Dr. Knipmeyer's account of the 16th Louis's objections to the Queen's extravagances. This side of the King may have been very much in evidence when one got down to real research but I never did hear anything along that line in the casual accounts of their relations heretofore.

I am so glad you mentioned the picture Marie Threse sent her daughter of childhood days at Schoenbrunn. I did not know it graced her bedroom at Petit Trianon. I don't know if you are acquainted with that room, - possibly not, as I believe it is seldom available to visitors at the time you were there. I used to like to spend time in that suite, - a cosy apartment on the top floor, overlooking the informal gardens, the Temple d'Amour and away beyond to the Maison de la Reine. I suppose this room, as much as any in Europe, illustrates the degree to which the little refinements were extended when Mme. de Pompadour was building it in the 1760's. I may have mentioned before that the delicate carvings are delightfully carried out, and even so far as to appearing in the frames separating the several panes of glass at each window, - delightfully carved plants and flowers blossoming forth on these narrow strips of wood. Of course the Marly doors at the Metropolitan Museum are wonderful examples of Boisserie of the 1600's, but those window frames in the Queen's bedroom at the Little Trianon are as exquisite an example of the refinements of such art of the late 1700's as anything I ever ran across.

Only the infinite pleasure of viewing the tapestries with you could possibly exceed the pleasure I experienced in reading your splendid account of the various examples of that artistry currently on display at the Metropolitan. Somehow I had gained the impression from some place that they were 15th century La Rochefoucauld heirlooms, and I'm so glad you set me straight. It is a wonderful experience to view such a series, covering so many centuries, and I can well imagine that some of the 19th century ones were awful. Somehow I always liked the 15th century, - usually dark blues and greens, enlivened with "mille fleurs" and those of the 17th century Gobelin periods, - somehow tan touched with red as the dominant colorings, - these two types, the best. Paradoxically enough, we once had a very modest one that somehow united a suggestion of both centuries, for it was a solid deep blue, with old gold and, - perhaps I should say or instead of and, - silver fleur de lys. And it was lovely. Charm is the word for the 15th century ones while grandeur for the 17th century type. What wonderful things have people contrived, and how much I should have liked to feast on these glories in companionship with one who likes them equally.....

1888

2823

February 10th, 1948.

Memorandum; That neatly expresses the heat situation, as felt from where I sit.

The butaine supply began running low this morning. In response to a summons, a truck bearing a fresh shipment reached Melrose about 4 p.m. On turning from the road into the garden, the front wheels of the big old vehicle got stuck in the ditch. Two men from the garage, a dozen negroes and two tractors swarmed around to extricate the thing, but after laboring for four hours, gave up the job, deciding that a wrecking machine would be required on the morrow to get things going again. At this moment, my heater gives off a feeble glow, radiating about as much heat as a fire-fly, as "I pray all the night for the day to come on". Fortunately, the thermometer is in the mid 40's, and if I really get chilly, I can toss a couple of logs into my fireplace whenever the spirit feels so impelled.

It is said that like the other 47 States, Louisiana has but a limited supply of butaine, both for this year and next, which seems odd, since Louisiana's sub-surface oases oil. I believe Louisiana has the highest gasoline prices of any State in the Union, - due, as I understand it, not to the presence of limitless oil supplies, but to the unusually high gasoline taxes, introduced by the late Mr. Huey P. Long. That I can understand. But why there should be a butaine shortage, - regardless of price, I cannot imagine.

But if fuel just missed in its delivery, the postman came through generously enough, bringing me a nice fat letter from you, two or three short notes, - as enclosed, plus a lot of second class mail. I have reserved your letter for the morrow, however, as an interruption succeeded interruption at every time my Ehtopian and I found ourselves in camera. I don't know how everybody passing this way timed their arrivals and departures so perfectly as to unhinge each of several efforts on our part to take up the type of communication which I always reserve for just myself. Peter passed this way, and on departing was replaced by "Little King" who

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was followed by Big Six, who was followed by Cy who was followed by Dee-dee Boy who was followed by Celeste, - and so the evening ran out. Mr. Brew will be back early in the morning, and so I shall be able to commune with you then in confidence.

Robina would be interested in reading Dr. Miler's note, but I send it along to you, since it is my custom not to share other people's messages with anyone save your own good self. Off hand, I would gather that Dr. Miller expects to head out this way sometime, but I wouldn't be able to guess just when. I shall acknowledge her card, acquainting her with the possibility that the Madam might attempt the Ashville hejira in April, but even that information is but a guess at best, but it may assist the little doctor in formulating her plans.

It was certainly a surprise to learn that Essie Mae had undergone an operation, and in response to her note, I must respond by tomorrow's post, touching on several points, and doing the best I can to acquaint her with my patient's probable reaction to a visit from Mary Daggett. The latter lady is remarkable, as I may or may not have pointed out in previous letters. Twenty years ago or so, she found herself a teacher at the college in Natchitoches, with an aged mother and two small sons. I can't seem to recall if her husband was alive but ineffectual, or if he had passed on. In any event, the lady be-stirred herself, gathered up her several dependents, and flew off to Yale where she read Law. On graduating, she moved to Baton Rouge where she became one of L. S. U.'s foremost authorities and teachers of Law. I believe she is recognized as one of the country's leading authorities in whatever branch of Law she is engaged. She is lovely home in Baton Rouge and is widely celebrated as one of the most charming women in Louisiana. Somewhere or other along the line, there was a slight hitch in the relations between Mary Daggett and Kate Perkins, and I know not the circumstances, but it had something to do about Huey Long's finger in Louisiana Educational circles. - Miss Kate taking one side and Miss Mary the other. Somehow the Madam built up something in her mind that never seemed to do vallope in Miss Kate's, so that until very recently, at least, one found the somewhat odd presence of a bias on the part of the Madam which no longer lingered in Miss Kate's heart. I shall try to eradicate whatever it is that rankles in the Madam's memory, and so bring less belles Culver and Daggett to Melrose to entertain and divert my patient.

I intended speaking of the continuance of the Mardi Gras spirit among the younger folk on the river, but I have run out prematurely, I see, but it is good to report that New Orleans isn't alone in celebrating this custom....

2/7/48

2/7/48

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a.

Memorandum: How nice to hold your letter, which arrived yesterday, for today's reading, and how much I appreciate your confidence in acquainting me with circumstances abroad. I always want to understand how things are going with those who mean so much to us, and I thank you sincerely for sharing this picture with me.

I am honestly not surprised to learn that the domestic road over yonder gets a little rough now and then. Although I know nothing about the circumstances of the births of either the husband or the wife, I can well picture some of the circumstances. One reason why I was never popular with the husband was due to my own clumsiness. The first time I ever laid eyes on him, before I ever knew he was in any way known to the one who was to become his wife, I recognized instantly the probable difficulties stretching before him in life, and I think I unguardedly betrayed my pity in my facial expression. Now nobody really wants to be pitied, and often genuine pity is mistaken for something else or other.

I think the gentleman in question is a perfect example of the handicapped personality of which I have spoken to you as being the keystone of my psychology theory which, so far as I know, has never yet found itself expressed in any writings, popular or scientific, on the subject. But skipping the primary and cardinal point, the youth was lonely then, and by nature, felt impelled toward the Madona, the maternal type, older than himself, and possessed of attributes of years and intellect that responded perfectly to his needs at the time. It was a 50-50 chance that each personality might forever supply the needs of the other, - but that chance flew out the window when the youth again found himself in the midst of his family, as he does today, when the needs he experiences in New York for the love of a particular type, have been supplanted by the original family circle, - or sufficient numbers of the original circle to obviate the need - and desire - for the wife.

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In my opinion, their wedding was no more of a chance than the average one. Besides, that is water over the dam.

What really matters is how the future may best be expected to turn. Personally, I feel that the most important thing for happiness in either or both their cases, - if it is single or double, - I know not which, - is for them, singly or together, to break away from his family, which by its very existence under a single roof, robs the husband and wife of the very bond that should bind them together. And if he will not leave, then I feel that she should by all means. Of course there is the problem of the child. A child brought up under such unpleasant domestic circumstances is better off if he be separated from one member of the family, - and I'm not sure it makes much difference, - although usually the mother will wreck the home before she will forego possession of the child, which is entirely understandable, - but nevertheless regrettable.

But I have dawdled along too far, and so I shall break off with the problem, and turn to the difficulty you mention in writing when one understands so little as to how incoming mail is received, by whom, and by whom read. I must confess to you that that element has been a strong deterrent in my own genuine impulse to write from time to time to the wife. In view of a lack of harmony in that household which I have from the first thought would eventually develop, and being almost certain that my letters, if seen by others, than her eyes, might not be particularly welcomed, my impulses to write have somehow congealed at the moment I set pen to paper, - or fingers to keys, as I have on a few occasions, - only to give up the attempt. And so I can readily appreciate how you feel when you say you are harassed a little by this quandary.

But no longer is our own feelings in this matter of paramount importance. The only point worth considering now is the fact that the lady should be assured that her friends remain steadfast straight through, even though the ground on which she temporarily finds herself standing seems to be crumbling.

Accordingly I shall write her a little note to be enclosed with your next letter. I leave it to you to decide if it is appropriately phrased to go forward or not. It was kind of you to mention her address, so that I might write direct. But I should rather share your out-going mail with you, if you think such transmission will not be cloud anything on the arrival of the post at its destination. I shall enclose an envelope for your convenience, so if you feel it should be posted separately, - or not at all, - every thing can be accomplished with dispatch. And again my thanks...

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February 12th, 1948.

Memorandum: Again I owe you my sincerest thanks for another manifestation of your kindness, as expressed in your air mail, reaching me today, and returning Dr. Miller's communication so promptly.

I have no objection at all to losing my mind with such a sympathetic soul as your own, but I certainly hope I don't begin letting it slip by sending communications intended for you, to somebody else. It was good of you to tell me that my Memorandum of the 5th reached you on schedule, so that means I didn't switch the correspondence. I hope you received Robina's letter to me and that that one did not inadvertently get into an envelope for Dr. Miller.

And thanks no end for having taken the trouble to send me Franz Zweig's address. I shall write her tonight so it may start winging its way at the same time this letter goes forward to you.

Today, being Knipmeyer Day, the good doctor came by for a little chat. I pressed him on his reasons for liking Proud Destiny, having become curious why such varying tastes seem to find delight in the book. I came to the conclusion that aside from the rather broad virtue of appealing to his general interest, there was the matter of the King's operation which may have intrigued him, particularly. He expressed his disappointment that the details of the nature of the case were never given. I don't know if those reasons have ever been set down in print, but I had the good fortune to spend some time over original documents bearing on the precise nature of the case when spending some delightful hours in the private library of Louis XIV at the Chateau de Versailles, - the room which has subsequently been styled that of Mme. Adelaide, - the first or second room, advancing from the King's bedroom, not in the main body of the Chateau, but in the wing toward the Chapel that juts out into the courtyard.

I guess no one gets into that delightful room for studying the marvelous treasures that its book cases contain behind their taffeta screened glass doors. One map that particularly liked was made by the XIVth Louis, tracing in red ink just where the lead pipes ran underground about the gardens, to supply the Chateau and the various fountains, jets, swimming pools and baths. There was

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another which was equally lovely, showing respectively, - there were 12 or 15 of them, - the different royal parks where the King hunted. They were so beautifully executed that not only all the alleys in the forest were shown, but even the individual trees, rocks, etc, while deer and other game appeared in this copse or that, while likenesses in minute miniature of his dogs and horses also appeared in these masterpieces.

But I'm getting away from the operation. From some of the papers I examined, it was perfectly clear that the King's predicament lay in the fact that a cord in his sex organ was so limited in length that unless it were cut, permitting the organ itself to assume its natural shape during sexual relations, that it was physically impossible for it to establish contact with the female organ, thus permitting direct fertilization of the female cell. Parthenotically, you will remember that but recently I learned that today a test tube and a needle can make anybody somebody's papa, but such remarkable doings by Science was still far off in Louis's day.

Now why this simple difficulty couldn't be set down in the Feuchtwanger book, and why it doesn't seem to have been recorded in any books I have read on all the excitement attending the visit of Joseph II to Versailles, and so forth and so on, - I cannot imagine. But I am glad to pass this particular along to you so that the whole business of the operation may be a little clearer when you reach that section of the book, - if, indeed, you did not know about the details before, which, possibly, you did.

Looking back on all the fuss that attended the question of an operation in those days, one cannot help wondering why there was such a to-do. Surely, so far as the King was concerned, it must have been a great relief, after all the years of the disappointing curve, on experiencing sex impulses, to finally get the thing straightened out, so to speak.

A fascinating atmospheric battle has been raging silently about us during the past 36 hours, and is still going on. Fifty miles to the west of us, it is snowing and freezing, while here the thermometer maintains an upper 60 reading. The cold mass of air, sweeping down from Canada, was confronted by an arm of warm air, blowing in from the Gulf, and passing directly over this section of the State. It shunted the cold mass to the east of us and to the west of us, where it has already extended itself into Mexico. But our warm current of air still maintains its salient, and tonight's Weather specialists, - all terribly excited about the phenomenon, declare that the warm air is winning, and even though the cold mass ultimately triumph, they are so spent that they will do no harm. Curious doings, strange correspondence, Lord, Lord.....

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Veiter 2/10/48
Bacheler 2/17/48

February 13th, 1948. The enclosure is nothing of particular interest, but if you haven't chanced to see the stamps, issued by the Wild Life Federation, I thought you might like to know about it. Every year a sheet of these stamps, illustrating various aspects of wild life, are brought forth, a sheet containing 36 stamps being sold for a dollar. I think the idea a good one, and possibly worthy of imitation in some other field, - such as old mannaions or some such, at some future date.

Under separate cover I enclose a couple of letters from today's post. I am under the impression Mr. Bacheler hasn't been well, but he apparently is on the mend.

Paul Veith's letter speaks for itself. He is a nice man, thin as a rail, married to a very hefty wife, and possessed of five children, and little else to believe. He frequently buys up old plantation libraries and private collections from the New Orleans area, and sometimes runs across some quite interesting old 17th and 18th century items, sometimes acquired for a song. Accordingly I thought it might not be a miss to mention the item from the Anhalt collection, for there might be another copy hidden away in some Spanish moss in the Delta country.

The Nix he mentions is a New Orleans doctor who in an off moment a number of years ago, issued a small book in doggerel, describing all kinds of diseases and their causes and cures. Almost immediately upon its publication, the doctor and his family, realizing how tacky (perhaps spelled tacky), tried to buy up the edition. The Melrose library has none, I had one but lost it. It looks as though we might expect to locate one for Arenbourg. I may have quoted a few lines from Dr. Nix's efforts to you. The one in praise of Sasafraz, popularly supposed to be excellent in thinning the blood, runs something like this:

"In the Spring of the year when the blood is too thick, There is nothing so good as the Sasafraz stick. Sasafraz, oh, Sasafraz, thou art the stick for me, And in the Spring, it is of thee. Sasafraz, I'll ever sing to thee."

Don't you love that: - "Sasafraz, oh, Sasafraz....."

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It is pleasant to report that the Battle of the Elements, referred to in yesterday's report, seems to have at last come to an end. The flow of warm air ceased rolling in this afternoon. But during its constant advance during the past few days, the back of the advancing cold wave was broken. Tonight, for the first time in over a week, the sky is clear. The temperature is lower, - in the 40's, with Jack Frost having retreated Northward so that tomorrow's sun will bring a rise in the thermometer, - and, - I hope, - we shall have no more winter this year.

I don't know if I mentioned that on Wednesday night, - I guess it was Tuesday night, Mrs. Regard attended a Catholic Society in Watchitoches, or was about to when on entering the place, she fell and cracked her shoulder blade. She was taken to the hospital in Shreveport for treatment and then returned to Melrose on the following day. She will get along alright, for the pain is lessening now, but as she is about 77, I believe she will be quite a long time in mending. She is the nicest person you can imagine, and I'm sorry for her.

You mentioned going to the Theatre in your next to the last letter. I've forgotten how the name of the play is pronounced, - or spelled, although I have heard it mentioned over the radio. It is on some subject that I have heard about, too, but it eludes me at the moment.

I was glad to have the Ziegfeld Theatre, - on 6th Avenue and 54th Street, recalled to mind. I haven't been there in years, although I do recall having seen some pleasant things in that playhouse, - best of all, probably having been Show Boat, - along about 1929, when Helen Morgan, Edna May Oliver and lots of other people graced the cast.

Going back to Mr. Veith's letter, regarding his impression that I was pressed for time during his next to the last visit, I must say he was correct. When he arrived with the Worsleys that day, the clock pointed to four, with my patient needing me at the hour and supper scheduled for 4:30, while at the same time, as I explained to my guests as they arrived, I was having a conference in the next room with some friends of color who were pressed for time to catch a bus, but who needed my assistance in solving a problem which they were about to head into on reaching their destination. In other words, the moment Mr. Veith arrived was about the worst in the world, but I naturally asked them in, as I explained a portion of my problem. What muddled the waters was the fact that instead of chatting for a few moments and then breezing along for another visit, - actually they returned and spent the following evening here, they all remained for a half or three quarters of an hour, so naturally.....

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February 15th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Here it is Sunday again, and I think I haven't to a remarked as yet on how good was last Sunday's "C.B.S. Was There" program. I don't know if you saw it, but it was the Dreyfus case, and presented with the appropriate brevity, no prologed Devil's Island miseries, and all about centering mostly around the Court House at Rennes. I had forgotten that it was in that capital of Brittany that the second trial took place. Somehow the mention of Rennes never brings but two pictures to my mind, - the meeting of the Parlement there in Louis XI's reign and the proximity of Rennes to Les Rochers, home of la Marquise de Sevigne.

I can't recall what is scheduled for tonight, but perhaps you have already heard it anyway, and - I shall be catching up with it along about 10:30. It has been a quiet week end, much sunshine and exactly like Spring, with a few narcissus, luckily escaping the recent freeze, flourishing madly in the gardens, with a bunch of them, - plus another of daffodils doing big business on my desk here before me.

I did quite a bit of reading last night, - "Contemporary America", and was struck by the fact that even this book, edited by Dorothy Thompson, could get by the proof readers, and so set forth an error, - that President Harding died in Alaska, - a place which, I feel quite certain, he never reached. Another albeit unimportant bit of history I had forgotten, probably because the name meant nothing to me at the time the event transpired: - that the bonus army which converged on Washington during the Hoover regime and the reign of depression, was put down by the Armed Forces under the command of General MacArthur. Hoover's goose was but completely cooked when he summoned the troops to put the veterans out of Washington, but apparently Mr. MacArthur's name must have been forgotten as the head of the forces, - at least, I don't recall ever having heard any reference to the matter in these latter years after the General became the Mikado of Japan, in all but name. But let him

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run for the Presidency of the United States, and the press will be full of such souvenirs. Once a local wise-acre remarked with great profundity:

"If you ever decide to get interested in genealogy and especially the family tree, don't throw away money on a geneologist, - just run for some office, and you'll get a heap more particulars, - good and bad, - than a dozen experts in ancient lore could ever dig up."

And while on the subject of kin-folk, may I call you blessed for going to all the trouble of giving me the full data covering the Thomas Lamont family. I greatly enjoyed having this information as there were several people called to mind whom I had forgotten. Little Miss Anne Parish was the first wife of Corlyss of whose personality I know nothing, although I believe he was an engineer of some distinction, and also a breeder of blooded stock. You may recall having read something about him in the papers a few years ago in connection with his visit to Russia where he remained for some time as a guest of that Government, I believe.

And speaking of Russia recalls to mind that last night Lady Astor was broadcast over my favorite station, W. E. O., Des Moines, where the one time Nancy Langhorne addressed some group, - the same one to which Secretary Marshall was scheduled to address a night or to early, but was forced to do so by radio, his plane having been forced down in Knoxville. I disagreed with much that she had to say, but enjoyed every word of what she put forth. You would have liked her account of her trip to Russia with her husband and George Bernard Shaw. If memory serves, Lady Astor is no spring chicken, but her voice continues good and her wit as sharp as ever. Her use of such unlovely words or word as "guts" indicates that she at least as slight inhibitions in her speech, but perhaps that is part and parcel of her wit, which perhaps ought to be, but isn't just as shades higher.

But here I am run out, and so many things to talk about. But surely you have had enough for this sitting, and so I shall fore-go the pleasure of further chatter. It was so good to have your letter, and I shall speak of further points in it shortly.

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February 16th, 1948.

memorandum: All my Memoranda are odds and ends, I guess, but this one will be especially so, what with little nothings to report.

Like the rest of the country, we are in full Spring.

That's one oddity alright.

And then, let's see. Oh, yes, a hill-billy Sheriff's deputy on Saturday afternoon claimed a Melrose "little River negro," "essem Hachette, drew a gun on him, and said hill-billy came with Sheriff Morris to pick up the culprit. The negro is one of those no-good "niggers" disliked by his own people and loved by nobody. I wish he and the hill-billy might have shot it out, finishing off each other. But the negro was taken to jail and will probably get a few years, - and no one will miss him.

On Sunday night, having slept little on Saturday, I failed to awaken to hear the "Q B S Was There" program.

Both on Saturday night and Sunday night, Charlie, the dachhund, got under my house about 3 a.m., worrying my otherwise very friendly neighbors who have their home under the floor of my boudoir. Quite naturally they retaliated, driving Charlie out a-flyin', while I was equally moved to get up to put on electric fans and throw open all the doors and windows. I'm still on the side of my skunks, and shall do my best to dissuade Charlie from such nocturnal business from here on out.

What with the Law having been down this way on Saturday afternoon, the local dispensers of liquor feared a repeat visit might be made that night, and so there was a dearth of Saturday night requisites. It seems that Sara gave a party, but ran out of supplies between 2 and 3 a.m. He and Peter came by to ask if I could

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lend them so to hold the party over until dawn.
I lied and said I couldn't. But I did give them
another drink which they didn't need and sent them
on their way.

This noon, Pilgrims came from Ohio, - a Mr. and
Mrs. Doerbel, - or some such. They must be somehow associated
with some of Payne's connections up yonder. I was
appealed to for a tour. They were very nice but definitely
not the "ive" ent Cigar dull type. There was nothing
extraordinary about the tour and neither the Pilgrims
nor I manifested much enthusiasm, I guess. On saying
goodbye they tried to give me a dollar which I declined.
It seems they returned a few minutes later, going directly
to Celeste's house. They told her they had never been
so treated in their travels as I had treated them,
and asked for my name so they might send me some cigars
on their return to Ohio. I'm glad I know Reddy
Baranowsky likes cigars, for while he doesn't know it,
he is headed for a present one of these days.

A small delegation from the Roosevelt School on
Little River visited me this morning. They were taking
up a collection with a view to buying their school a
basket ball. Years ago Dr. Miller and I decided that
we would give the school a Christmas present, and
after casting about for some time, finally decided that
what the boys and girls wanted most was the ring
contraptions required for playing basket ball. And
a fine set we secured for them from Sears, Roebuck,
and the school children were delighted, and together
erected a fine set of end poles to support the
iron rings. The girls and boys both seemed to
love this out-door sport, even if some of the elders
looked sideways at the young ladies indulging in
such a "manish" game, as it was styled. But now, it
seems, the iron rings still stand firmly, but the basket
ball has played out, and what with Spring all over the
place, etc., etc., and the whole thing was going to
cost \$4.39. "If us-es sends the money and it don't come
O D, and we've got \$3.74, and Miss Pearl, us-es teacher,
says maybe yawl couldst find some scrapin's to fill
us-es moeny out a little".....

Lord, Lord.....
.....and how right was Will Percy when he wrote in "Lanterns
on the Levee" that there are only two types of people
in the South who matter, - the aristocrats and the niggers,--
and he couldn't have hit the nail squarer on the head.

So much for the "ads and "nds, exepe t that I
talked with "r. "and on the telephone today and told
him to put a bee in his son's bonnet so far as Gardenias
for this year's planting on "renbourg go.....

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2835 Dora 4/15/48

a bit of Jones - Compton
genealogy

February 17th, 1948.
Memorandum:
Dora Wesseem to be in full summer, - for the moment at
least.

There was a letter from Dora today, which I
enclosed. It has a reference to a possible law suit,
of which I would speak. When Clarence Compton was
killed in the automobile wreck last November, caused
by Dr. Phelps's reckless driving, - and possible narcotic
state at the time, Dr. Phelps was slightly injured, -
a broken rib, I believe, and his car was smashed.
Clarence's wife was all busted up, but survived, and is
still in a cast from neck to toe. Now, it is said, Dr.
Phelps is contemplating suit against Clarence's wife
on the grounds that it was their car that struck him.

There are other elements in the situation,
nothing to do with Dr. Phelps, but with the children of
Clarence's wife, that somehow suggests the currently
off-droned popular song of the moment, - "I'm My Own
Grandpa". And yet there is no confusion about kinsman
in the legal tangle toward which the settlement of the
Compton matter is concerned. But this is how the thing
stacks up. The present "rs. Compton was twice
married. Her first husband was Louis Jones by whom she
begot four children. On the death of Louis, the
Estate was divided, - but held intact, into three
portions, one for the widow, the other two parts for
the children. Then "rs. Jones married Clarence Compton,
by whom she begot three children. Compton owned little
or no property, but managed the Estate of Louis Jones
for his wife and stepchildren. It is said he received
no salary during the past 15 years for his services.
Now the lawyers are urging the three Compton children to
start suit against or in conjunction with, their
mother, demanding unpaid salaries of their father.
This would certainly wreck the estate, but I suspect it
is doomed to destruction anyway, for when the lawyers get
through settling the other legal aspects of the situation,
the lawyers will have put on such a fee that the estate will
have to be sold to satisfy their claims. This is the

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estate, adjoining Melrose on the other side of the river, for which James W. Gerard offered over a hundred thousand dollars two or three years ago. But that offer will probably never be made again, and probably how the thing will end up is something like this: - the lawyers will throw it on the market to collect their fees, the estate will be broken up, and probably J. H. Henry will get a fat slice adjoining some of his personally held property, - and this slice going to him will be what is left of the old foundations and gardens of the defunct Jean Baptiste Mettoyere house.

What a tangle, and how uninteresting to read, and yet, - and I know not why, - I like to keep clear of the picture of local doings for your own comprehension.

I listened to two broadcasts from W. O. Des Moines last night which were quite interesting. Lady Astor was presenting a stone, taken from the debris of the bombed House of Parliament, the piece to be housed temporarily in a "China Museum, and later to be incorporated along side the corner stone when the new Capital, - or is it Capitol, - of Iowa is built, - so that this American building will include this souvenir of the old "Mother of Parliaments".

And the other thing was an interview with an official of a relief agency accompanying the "Lincoln Train", - one of the food bearing trains, starting from Lincoln, Nebraska, and picking up food as it crosses the intervening states until it reaches New York, from where it is shipped to Europe. The interview was almost a sermon for tolerance, and it was impressive to hear the man tell how at each station where the train stopped, there were towns people and country folk, and a minister, a priest and a rabbi who participated in the little ceremonies, attending the coupling on of one or more cars. The man had had quite a lot of experience with the relief group administering newly arrived food shipments in Hamburg, and the picture he gave of the eagerness with which the people looked for the opening of the depot was touching.

A letter from little Miss Alberta reports she is tired from all the comings and goings attendant upon Mardi Gras and she appears to look longingly in this direction. I shall write her tonight, suggesting she come up immediately.

As I labored under a hot sun at Tremblou today, I was frequently distracted by the passing of great big old trucks, hauling materials to Cane River where a crew is already working on the new bridgeheads. So things turn.....

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about Mrs. Brandon.

February 18th, 1948.

Memorandum: I asked her about the patient with the black and white problem, but she could tell me no more. I shall inquire the next time I see her. I hope nothing has gone wrong.

The enclosures are varied, - Lois Lester being casual but Mrs. Brandon's - as usual, - being good.

I am going to write her tonight to congratulate her on her decision to place the portraits of B. L. C. and of his father and mother, by Audubon, in the Oakley plantation home which Louisiana is currently restoring. I have always feared that Mrs. Brandon's sister, who cares nothing about Audubon's or historic documents, might "clean up" at some future time, and consign the whole valuable collection to the flames.

And while on the subject of Mrs. Brandon, I am wondering if I ever mentioned how Fortune took a hand in her situation, a few years following her husband's death. When Mr. and Mrs. Brandon were living in their own home, a friend who became destitute and ill was taken in by them and nursed back to health. Later the woman, somehow forsaken by her own family and friends, moved to Dallas, I believe. Eventually Mr. Brandon died, and Miss Nellie had to sell their home and move to a somewhat uncomfortable place in another part of Natchez. Perhaps a year later, the lady whom she had befriended died, and by her will, skipped over her relatives who had deserted her, and left property she had subsequently acquired to Miss Nellie. I think it was around 25 thousand dollars, - sufficient for Mrs. Brandon to secure a fair income from by the purchase of an annuity. Fate so often does quite opposite tricks, it is pleasant to record that sometimes she contrives to make things work perfectly, as, it seems to me, it did in this case.

In passing, however, I must remark that I never could understand why it was that Jeanne McDowell, living all alone in that big old Oakland mansion of hers, and having been on the friendliest of terms with Miss Nellie for 80 odd years, never invited her, - in her curving financial chart, to come and share her home with her.

The full summer weather continues, and I scuffled around a little longer than usual at Tremblou today. On my return to Melrose, I found Dr. Eleanor awaiting me. She had much to say about the perfect judgement of the lady who selected and sent the Christmas gift, which she says she

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is taking with her if she can arrange to fly out to Carmel, California for a week's rest. She says she has become so wedded to the comfort of the book holder that it has become an integral part of her bed furniture.

I asked her about the patient with the black and white problem, but she could tell me no more. I shall inquire the next time I see her. I hope nothing has gone wrong.

On Worsley came a few minutes later, bringing me to young cats, to replace my late departed friend. One of the cats is quite extraordinary. For the first four months of its life it was called Cyclops because it was born with but a single eye. But ten days ago an opening appeared where the second eye should have been, and lo! the second one quickly came into being, and both optics now appear quite normal. The other cat is called "None" and pronounced "No name." And so now my little yellow cat has two little friends with whom can frolic, and Dora, poor dear, has two more children to mother.

Dr. Eleanor says she has had 8 babies in the past two or three days, and what with all the chasing about during the cold spell when the roads were impossible, she really thinks a couple of weeks of California sunshine would do her much good. I think so, too, but neither she nor her husband have ever learned the rare art of relaxation, and so I'm not at all sure that she will really stay put, even in Carmel.

I saw Log at the store yesterday morning. He told me he was en route to the Lady Doctor's house with his wife, being sick. Dr. Eleanor told me that Log's wife consulted her on a pain in her chest, but on examination, Dr. E. could find nothing wrong with it. Log it seems had been talking with "on while the ladies were going over the chest, and just as Dr. E. was about to dismiss her patient, Don confided that Log had mentioned the reason his wife had been brought to Cloutierville was because of some unceasing flow of blood in the region of the vagina. It seems that both Dr. Eleanor and her patient had both been concentrating on the wrong department, and Dr. E. couldn't imagine why the patient had directed her attention to the chest. Aren't niggers wonderful.....

Tonight the plantation seems to have but two residents, the "madam asleep" in the big house and I chatting with you from this house. "an is in New Orleans and all the plantation people are up the road at Sammy's, to the movies, Celeste and madam regard went to "hroveport to attend to the latter's shoulder blade, so I reckon they may be back later. But regardless of the set-up, I shall straightforth skip up to Arenbourg and see how the terrace looks in this moonlight.

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2839

February 19th, 1948.

Memorandum

How nice to receive your note in today's post.

How noble of you to take time off when everything is swirling around you at such a great rate. - and on all fronts. Bismark was perfectly right when he declared one should avoid both an Eastern and a Western front at the same time. Or would it be more correct, Concourse-ly speaking, to say a Northern and Southern. Oh misere.....

I am so glad you mentioned that I would understand. Of course I do, and I call you twice noble for sticking to the "must" momentarily, so that when we get things around for an uninterrupted chat, we can really have a good go at things.

I'm glad you found the European note alright, and I shall leave it to you to tell me whenever you think another would serve a good purpose. I appreciate your kindness in handling the forwarding of these little items along with yours, for that affords me the feeling of added security that the phraseology is correct to pass whatever censor board it may have to pass in review after reaching its destination.

As I think of it, I laugh to myself. - when I think how I gave one big blast in that direction in the Psychology Department, - and never returned to it in a subsequent letter. Of course we could eventually sit up nights, never finishing the minute and interesting ramifications. I shall be glad to have your opinion as to how right or wrong, - or half-right or half-wrong, I may have been, in my single but somewhat thorough-going interpretation of the characters and personalities involved. I think I need not tell you that my intention was not to pick the bones of the patients, but rather by diagnosing the case, to understand the possible approaches to a solution, if any. - or at least an understanding of some aspects of the situation in order that our remote gestures of "hands across the seas" might be moved to a purpose that had some definite hint of what confronts the people involved.

In today's post came a letter from the Joe Henrys of Beaumont and one from Sister. Each communication threatening us with a week end visit. Sister will

learn of Joe's letter prior to her departure for Melrose, so I reckon she may cancel her trip, but I hope not, for each of them, so emotionally unstable, usually succeed in tearing the other to pieces. And since "an can't stand either of them, it usually terminates in one great big bang. Personally I like the quiet of their absence, but if come they must, then I like to have them blow in all at the same time, for one resounding electric storm is ever so much better than annoying minor ones, three weeks apart.

The summer continues in these parts, but without the sun today. It has tried so hard to mist, but only succeeded in being excessively damp. I took the protection of the clouds as a good time to do some planting of live oaks at Arenbourg. I set in a couple along side the somewhat puny looking Japanese live-oaks on the terrace, so that if the one variety failed, there would be a chance that the other might survive. And if by some miracle both do, then I shall be able to transplant the one set to another spot.

I planted two so that they will eventually shade the future Maison de la Reine, leaving ample space between them so that our view down the river will be uninterrupted.

I don't know why live oaks are so difficult to transplant successfully. Perhaps it is the tap root which usually is as long as the tree is high. The ones I set out today were about 3 feet in height, with an added three feet of root, going straight down into the ground, which requires quite a bit of digging if one gives adequate protection to the little feeder roots radiating from the tap. I guess my efforts were accomplished as well as anyone could hope for. Now I shall leave it to them to make up their minds, but the rains promised for tomorrow will no doubt be very much on our side in persuading them to grow.

Last night, on prowling around to see what was in a couple of containers from the New Orleans public I stumbled on to Fitzgerald's *Rubiyat* read by none other than Alexander Scribby. It was elegant. And I liked it doubly because it reminded me of the David Eugene Smith translation of a horse of quite another hue, and the lovely illustrations.

I wonder if I ever mentioned David Eugene Smith to you in relation to Lady Gray. On second thought, I'm almost sure I did. But perhaps I never did mention another element in the David Eugene Smith story, his relations with and intimate connection with the dominant family who was the actual basis for Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*. Well, that is something else, and for another sitting, but I want to close with the natural remark that in my reading last night

February 20th, 1948.

Memorandum:

The poet may be right, but from where I sit, it would seem he is slightly mistaken in his declaration that "it isn't raining rain, you know, it's raining violets". But the important thing is that it is warm and damp, and everything that survived winter must be feeling a urge at this moment to grow mightily pretty soon.

Before I forget it, I must mention that I caught up with Sunday's "C B S Was There" program last night over K R L D, Dallas. I think you missed the original broadcast, - "The Ides of March". The murder of Caesar was so well done that it actually seemed contemporary. Perhaps one element that made it seem especially contemporary was the arrangement of the text in such a way as to make Julius Caesar's political philosophy seem ever so much like that of F. D. R. - and what with the chief assassins being members of the reactionary Senate, a suggested parallel was doubly provocative of thought.

This Sunday, according to announcement, the program will cover the Battle of Gettysburg. If Columbia is as successful in simplifying and clarifying the various elements that contrive to determine the course of events, the broadcast should be worth hearing. Perhaps you have seen some mention to General Lee's physical condition at Gettysburg, - the determining factor, so it is declared, that lost the battle for the South. I think what wasn't known about Lee's health for years after July 4th, 1863 was the fact that he had been incapacitated by diarrhea just before the battle started and accordingly he was unable to. I suppose the Freeman Life of Robert E. Lee must cover this physical debility that swung the fate of the nation decisively, but I first ran across the fact in a Civil War diary which

I don't know if you have visited the Batterfield but if so, I'm sure you found it a very interesting place. As a kind of fitting conclusion to my Mississippi Valley journey in 1938, I stopped off at Gettysburgh on my way back to Manhattan, and I was much impressed by the place.

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We take the Times-Picayune, but it remained for Dr. Knipmeyer to tell us on Thursday that Harnett Kane is doing daily columns for that paper. I suppose this must be along the lines Lyle wrote, - usually during Mardi Gras, although the Kane articles seem to continue well into Lent. Curiously enough, - or perhaps not so strange, my patient, who reads the paper every day between noon and 2, has never yet been able to find any articles by Kane. I think the man must be running low on material, however, for Dr. K. says that Thursday's article was a complaint against Tony Martin for singing a song wherein he made New Orleans sound not as locally pronounced, but as though it were spelled New Orleans. I heard Tony Martin sing the song, - an old popular ditty which obviously was written from someone not of this section, since by the context requires one to pronounce the name "Orleenes", since the foregoing line is something like:

".....city of beautiful Queens,
Way down yonder in New Orleans."

I suppose Mr. Kane must have heard of poetic license, and surely he wouldn't have the word "Queens" so adjusted as to rhyme with "Nouvelle Orleans" in the French fashion. Accordingly I conclude he must be hitting the bottom of the barrel, so far as stuff he can find to write about.

On the national political scene, Mr. Truman, the radio says, has headed for a West Indian vacation. I guess he is going to back-track on his former declaration in favor of the Fair Practices legislation. I think he thereby throws away another opportunity to write his name large on the American scroll of history. It appears to me he can scarcely hope to be elected President, and therefore, were he to come out with a bang in favor of his suggested racial legislation, he might at least gain some admiration from people who honor people who have the courage of their convictions. It would be exhilarating if he would tell the Southern politicians that he is going to stand pat on his recommendation for equal treatment to all Americans; he could then hope that recalcitrant Southern Democrats could or would jump the fence into the Republican fold, - where they ought to be. Eventually, I hope, there will be a two party system in the South, and that will be better for everybody, and by thus loosening the death grip of the one party system on the one time confederacy, it would have a heartening effect on the nation as a whole.

1483

2843

Petit Trianon
Kucherauer Book

I must apologize to you for having so badly explained the Bourbon difficulties, resuscitating in all the flurry about to have or not to have an operation. To be perfectly honest about the matter, I have been so busy with letters who were forever talking all around the subject, and never chapters in fact, - or even books on the matter, and what was really up. I assume that anyone who is interested in the subject of Bourbon difficulties is interested in the subject of Bourbon difficulties.

Your elegant letter of Wednesday to hand in history at Saturday's post. From the enclosed letter, you will discover that our guest list was not so extended as you had originally been threatened.

I cannot tell you how much I appreciate your nobility in giving me such a comprehensive picture of the contents of Proud Destiny. It is the next best thing to having shared a reading of the book with you.

And how nice of you to mention the notation on the map of the Petit Trianon, which indicates the Queen's bedroom as being on the main floor rather than on the top. In reality, the map is correct, although there is this to be said as an added particular, Louis XV and his grandson's wife, - Marie Antoinette, had like traits regarding their bed rooms. In the big palace of Versailles, Louis XV always occupied the King's chamber, spacious and quite adequate for the ceremonies attendant upon the monarch's getting up and going to bed. His successor, the XV Louis, always occupied the same King's bed chamber, too, for the morning and night ceremonies, - but with this difference, Louis XV, once having been properly put to bed by his courtiers, and in the latter departed, it was his custom to get up and to occupy the comparatively small apartments in the wing jutting out into the court yard, where he invariably remained until the state hour of rising, - or just a little before, when he would return by secret corridors to the official bed chamber, and there he discovered himself when the giant Swiss opened the doors to the nobility, awaiting the King's levee in the adjoining Oeil de boeuf, where he would then retire to his private apartments.

In the original plans for the Petit Trianon, Mme. de Pompadour arranged to have the bedroom situated in the place the map indicates. She died just as the building was completed, so never occupied it. But Mme. de Barry did. When Louis XVI ascended the throne, he gave the Petit Trianon to Marie Antoinette, and she, like Louis XV at Versailles, preferred the smaller, but equally elegant room immediately above, which for her own occupancy, although the larger room below always remained, - officially, - as her bedroom. Perhaps she liked the intimacy of the upper chamber better, and perhaps she also liked the better view it afforded of the Temple of Love and the Hamlet beyond. Only her most intimate friends ever penetrated the upper chamber.

2848

2844

I must apologize to you for having so baldly explained the Bourbon difficulties, resulting in all the flurry about to have or not to have an operation. To be perfectly honest about the matter, I was always a little cross with writers who were forever talking all around the subject, writing chapters, in fact, - or even books on the matter, and never did get around to explain in a few intelligent sentences what was really up. After all, I assume that anybody, - free, white and over 21, sufficiently developed mentally to be interested in history, wouldn't insist on putting overalls on the family canary. Of course we must admit that one lady did take along a doll to the doctor with her when she expected to point out her difficulties in the knee-cap section to her family physician, and, nearer home, I must tell you that I was but definitely disappointed one day when Dr. Miller came by this house where I was whaling away with pick-axe and shovel, contriving a fountain, and with ultra modesty asked me if I would slip on a shirt so that she could ask me how to spell some word or other. That, - from a lady who had carved up Ubangi chieftens, just about knocked me flat. And it recalled to my mind how, as a child, I used to hear about what a tremendous kick tired business men got in seeing ballet girls perform on the stage, and tried to picture in my mind what happened when those same gentlemen visited any fashionable beach in July.

Well, Lord, there was also the time I used to get furious when Madam Moore, when reading to me from one bellum newspaper, would suddenly go kittenish on me and refuse to finish through some patent medicine advertisement on which she had embarked. But enough of such reflections, and I rest assured that you never suspected that in touching upon an historical point in the question of Bourbon succession, I had any intention of being inconsiderate.

And may I thank you for giving me the latest slant on the Kane status in the eyes of his great admirer in the Tribune. I like to keep up with such business and as in so many lines, it is only thorough your own generous care that I am able to do so. I was struck by the nightingale that crept into the letter to him from some lady, - and his response. I gather that neither Mr. Kane nor his correspondent knows that nightingales are European birds and that we do not have them in America. The mocking bird sings mightily on moonlight nights on Kane River as you will observe, and adore at Grenbourg eventually. But since Mr. Kane knows nothing of such standard plants in Louisiana as crepe myrtle, sweet olive and so on, and has often asked me to identify them for him while at Gretna, one naturally shouldn't expect the same urban hill-billy to be up on his Audubon section.

We hope you heard the Red Allen show with Maurice Evans, which I thought quite good and which I'm sure you liked too, if you could get an ear in....

2848

2845 Mrs Nellie 2/18/48

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V. 1941 to am

February 23rd, 1948.
Somebody told me the banks in town were closed today, but oil trucks, like Sinclair and Texaco were operating as usual through this neighborhood, and I saw wholesale grocer sales people, the bread man and the engineers working on the new bridge, - all at their routine labors. The plantation didn't work for two good reasons, - first, because it had somehow been an unusually gay week end and hang-overs were plentiful, and secondly, the weather was too chill and damp for people with sense to be out. It took someone with no sense at all, like myself, to get in behind a hoe and a spade, - but I have a warm house and dry clothes to turn to after getting a good soaking, - and that may be an element in contemplating the plantation labor charts.

Memorandum:

I am hoping it has been a holiday for you. I can't tell for the life of me if Washington's Birthday, - like Christmas, is celebrated generally throughout the country on Monday, should the 22nd of February, as it does this year, fall on Sunday.

I don't suppose I am the first person to have slept through the major part of a battle, but I must confess I was guilty of that negligence last night when Columbia put on Gettysburg. I must say I was a little sleepy before the big guns opened up, and that may account for the fact that after about five minutes I passed out completely. I heard some talk of General Meade, General Fickett and so on, and I traversed Cemetery Ridge and so on, but I apparently just couldn't follow through. Perhaps I shall find better going on Thursday night when I shall take another swing at the rebroadcast then.

At the moment, I am skipping through Ernie Pyle's Home Country, and find it good. And it is good not only for itself but for some ideas it sets in motion in my mind. I shall have to turn them over a bit and ask you about some of them at another sitting, that is to say, your opinion of my opinions.

I chanced to be in the store today when J. H. telephoned from Honduras or El Salvador or some such weird place. He said he was having a pleasant trip in spite

2846

of a cold, - which reminded me of September in Ashville
as of 1947.

Melrose is always a bit on the topsy-turvy side when
either Joe Henry or Sister chanced to pass this way, but
somehow this week end was unusually so, - not because of
Joe, but just because elements somehow contrive to set
strange circumstances into operation or by some mysterious
combinations of impulses, unexpected people drop by to
see me at most unpredictable hours.

On Saturday at the stroke of 12, Taffy tapped at my
door. Taffy is a middle aged negro black as the ace
of spades, who lives somewhere in the far reaches between
Little and Red River. Taffy is a trapper, as is his wife
and 12 year old daughter. I've never seen the lady
trappers in the family, but should like to, for I am
always wondering if they in dress and exude as distinctive
odors as Taffy. He invariably wears a broad brimmed
black-black hat, which is just about the color of
his skin. I have never seen him in any garments but
overalls, and invariably they look new, possibly having
been to the wash-tub once, - and not quite ready-
from appearances, of being needful of making a second
journey to the soap-suds. But somehow there is always
the smell of rancid grease or some such, - but definitely
not a body odor but something having to do with the
man's profession that hovers about him.

What Taffy wanted was to tell me two things,
1st, he wanted a small glass of wine, and secondly he had
but recently learned that I wanted a pair of baby skunks,
and he wanted to know if I would accept them from him if
he would get them for me. I would. And get got his
glass of wine. But what is rather remarkable, he
definitely declined a second glass, - even the smallest
glass, for it was honestly true that he wanted but just
a taste of wine, and only a taste. I must mark that
on my calendar, for Taffy, you must admit, is an
unusual man, and especially at midnight on a Saturday.

He staid perhaps a half hour and then headed out
on foot in the general direction of Red River. Perhaps
I shall see him again a year hence or two years, but more
than likely he will be turning up some midnight with
the baby skunks, and Heaven alone knows what I shall
do with them until day break. And after day break I
shall probably have a lot of talking and explaining to
do to Ora and Harlie.

On midnight Sunday, Mattie and Sam Peace's boy, Joe,
tapped on my window. He is out of a Shreveport jail but
a couple of days, but that is a different story, and I shall
touch upon it at another sitting. Little King passed
this way before dawn, said he wanted to talk a little,
but he wanted to keep his secret, - and I didn't let on I
knew he was heading for town to try to get into the Army.

2847

February 24th, 1948.

Memorandum

"The garden's all lit-up" as three different
colored visitors declared during the day.

What with a few days of warm, damp weather, and
the natural impulse of the Chinese magnolias to get
going early in the season, dozens of them suddenly
burst into bloom this morning, and a very pretty sight
they are, too. For sheer color, the deep purple
ones are impressive, but the trees bearing hundreds of
shell pink and the ones with snowy white blossoms
are more striking, reminding me so much of little
clouds, temporarily caught in a tangle of leafless
branches. Of course the perfume they spread about the
place is heavenly.

Teddy drove us to Montrose to vote. - Celeste, the
Madam me, I didn't cast a ballot, but I was glad to
observe democracy in action, especially the more seamy
side, for the hill-billies were out in force. On
entering the little country store, the Madam raised a
mild tempest by announcing she had made the trip for the
sole purpose of voting for Sam Jones. Every gentleman
and lady hill billy in the place gapped and growled that
anyone could cast a ballot for anyone except their
patron saint, and have no doubt that Mr. Long will
win today's election, hands down.

On the home front, Aurellia has some additional
troubles. Bessie's arms and legs were badly swollen
and Aurellia's arm and leg were suffering from a burn, and
so the Bynog sisters called on the lady doctor last
evening. Aurellia says the lady doctor gave Bessie
five kinds of medicine and said she had better plan to
go to the hospital on Saturday if the medicine doesn't
have magical effects. I don't know what's wrong with
the girl. As for Aurellia, she was sitting next to
a red hot wood stove when her chair slipped out from
under her, tossing her slap on to the stove. Her right
arm above the elbow, and her leg, between the knee and
hip, display much bandages and impede her efforts to
do anything much but carry the Madam's glass of water now and
then. What disasters that family can cook up for itself
and for its mainstay, - little Miss Aurellia.

2848

I saw Sara at the store this morning and he asked me to drop by his house tonight, as he was having a few people drop in and we could all have a nice time talking. It was pouring at 7 o'clock, but I headed out regardless, and surprised Sara and Doreatha by putting in an appearance. The weather, it seems, had proven too much for everyone else, except Doreatha's papa, Dee-Dee Boy, who had come up on horseback from Little River. Our circle was small, but we had a heap of fun, and about out-did the four children who had been put to bed in the next room, but who were permitted to giggle and titter as much as they pleased.

We fell to talking about birthdays, and I find it interesting that Sara was born in 1914 and his son, Bill, on December 7th, 1941.

What with the rain still coming down at 10:30, Ezra brought me to Melrose in his car, so here I am, as dry as can be, in spite of the carryings on of the elements.

In today's post came a fat letter from the Library of Congress. I foolishly supposed it to be the response to my letter of late January which you ran through before it was sent. But I should have realized that the Library is much too leisurely in its correspondence to have responded within a month's time. What the letter did cover, it is a form letter. I believe that I am not quite certain, but as soon as I have glanced at it, I shall send it along, if it is worth it. I wish that organization would oil up its gears a little, for there is always something so futile about trying to do business when gaps of a month or two intervene between each attempted contact.

arenbourg, or a little slice of it, was so pretty this morning. I so wished you might have been struck, as was I, by the beauty of its glorious explosion of daffodils that greeted me through the morning mist. Because of the warmth that developed during the night, the whole bed, a solid green yesterday as marvelously yellow this morning, seemingly two or three hundred blossoms having all decided at the same moment to make up their minds. I am enchanted that they are definitely established in spite of last summer's heat, and from here on out until the end of time, they will be a re-curring glory every season along about now, and eventually, we shall gather gobs of them.

2849

Did I ever remark that Sara's name was spelled in French? Well, it was. Sara was named after the French Minister of War by that name, and that was the name she was named after. I suppose, but possibly you will want to glance over the prospectus, and the map on the envelope may hold some detail or other of interest.

Memorandum:

I enclose the Pilgrimage folder and its envelope, not because either holds anything particularly new, I suppose, but possibly you will want to glance over the prospectus, and the map on the envelope may hold some detail or other of interest.

Well, Mr. "one" won the election. Louisiana is heading in for some various faded aspects of the unlamented "King Fish" and the skullduggery will get under way immediately. I suppose, although the new officials are no inducted until May, I believe. Earle Long isn't nearly so smart as Huey, and so may not be able to serve up such raw deals as his brother, but he will lend no water to the State's reputation and no lucra to its Treasury. Somehow I feel much like I did when Tammy resumed its control of New York. But the city goes right along, even if it not so advantageously to the average citizen as it did under the late "little flower".

We needed no confirmation that Spring was upon us, or just in the offing, but the cardinals supplied a rejoinder today by starting up their mating calls. The male whistles one shrill note to which he appeals for a response from the object of his infatuation. If she doesn't answer immediately he whistles more loudly. Failing a second time, he blows a shrill blast that ought to put his vocal chords out of commission, and almost always this final effort brings forth some kind of a sound from the coy female, although she exercises lots of choice in the amount of enthusiasm she may apply. Sometimes a second contender for the lady's favorable consideration, mounts in with a whistle immediately on the heels of the first suitor's call, and well before any lady could possibly respond. And so the business of courting a bride goes on, and the birds seem to enjoy it, and I think it is swell. Perhaps you heard Lowell Thomas tonight speak of having been corrected by some Michigan writer, in order that Mr. Thomas pronounce Lake Pontchartrain to rhyme with ran. In all the years I have lived in Louisiana, I have never heard it spoken in any way than to rhyme with train, and when English was being spoken, and I guess the Michigan writer was just trying to air a bit of French. The Michigan writer was just trying to air a bit of French. The Michigan writer was just trying to air a bit of French.

About an hour after first dark, as I was hammering away on this keyboard, came a gentle tapping on my window. It was later. He said, "Log is grievin'" and his face looks worrisome and I feel like I ought to do something to gayify him a little, but I don't know what to do, so I comes to axe you.

Well, Lord, that's what we're living for, I guess, and so I told 'em to go back to Puffy's house and bring the Dark Duke over here and we'd see what we could make of things.

the truth of the matter is, as I discovered later, that Log's wife, Maxine, is in the Alexandria hospital, and Log is worried about her and the fact that her people received a letter from her, saying she would be glad if some of them could come to see her, but Log received none. But then recalled that he had had a telephone conversation with her, probably about the day she was writing her letter to Dee-Dee Boy, her papa, and so that somewhat bridged one chasm.

And so Peter departed and 20 minutes later, a big round moon flooding the night garden, I saw four midnight figures heading this way - Peter, the Dark Duke, Fung and Ezra. For half an hour, we didn't volunteer much conversation, but gradually the conversation caught a hold of everyone, and within an hour, everyone was feeling alright and ready to go on their several ways.

Esra really did more than anyone to induce a smile to spread over his brother-in-law's face. He dramatized the doings of Judge Jones in theatchitoches court, when sentencing one William Burden, negro, some years ago. A hill Billy had struck William with a board, breaking his arm, while William was on a carpentry job. To defend himself from further assault, William had kept the aggressor away from him by waving his hammer about his head. But of course the hill Billy had poor William arrested for intent to kill. The judge, in passing sentence, banged his gavel, shouting he had all the niggers present understand that this is a white man's world and that no nigger can attack a white man with a dangerous weapon, called hammer, - and thereupon to lend weight to his tirade, he banged this gavel mightily, - and just to show how dangerous it really might be, the head flew off, hitting a defense lawyer below the bench, - the niggers dying to roar, and the judge furious as the ridiculous figure he was making of himself...

February 26th, 1948

Memorandum

You will enjoy the enclosed letter from the widow Zweig.

Zweig.

I shall respond to her shortly, and in referring to the American Foundation, will take the liberty to mention your name, as a friend in New York who is acquainted with the institution, and Anne Parrish of Georgetown, Connecticut, as one writer in her neighborhood of Stamford, as considering reading something for the records.

If you care to, you might drop Madame Zweig a line, since she will already be acquainted with your name; for I assume she gets to New York on occasion, and I thought perhaps you would enjoy breaking bread with her, should opportunity be mutually agreeable and convenient.

I. Surellymadame Zweig flowered in a rare civilisation, unfortunately vanished from the contemporary picture, and I feel persuaded you would find her delightful in personal contact, possibly now in Manhattan and tomorrow at Arenbourg. And I'm wondering if it would be a delicate compliment to her, - on your part, - should a portion, at least, of your letter be penned in her native tongue.

On the home front, J. A. surprised everyone by blowing in from Central America this morning, a couple of days ahead of schedule. He says he found the sections he visited uninviting for financial investment except on a vast scale as in mining for gold, development of extensive sugar cane refineries. It seems there are no modern sugar converting mills between the Rio Grande and Panama, etc. He spoke with some enthusiasm of ruined Antigua, outside Guatemala City, and its vast Santa Clara Mission. There is some book on Antigua, I believe that is its title, and the Madam says she would be delighted, should you ever run across an inexpensive second hand one, if you would keep her in mind. She had one once, but gave it away. This is not anything to burden your mind, but just in case you should chance to stumble over Antigua.

2821

2852

The usual plantation sounds along this bend of Cane River had a new note added to their symphony today. It was the resounding bang of the pile drivers on the west bank of the river, where preparations continue for laying the foundations. What with the weather being hot and humid, and too wet for plantation operations, every mulatto and negro from Little River to Montrose were jammed on the old wooden structure, fascinated by the mechanical doings of the big old machines that were going full tilt.

Today, being Knipmeyer Day, the good doctor arrived as usual, bringing his wife and his chief nurse with him. In gossiping about Parish doings, I mentioned a name in last week's City Court Record, the Drunk and Down column, as we are pleased to call it. I mentioned in a previous note how delighted I was with the name of one Ora V. Pye listed as having been arrested on charge of prostitution. Dr. Knipmeyer said he knew the girl quite well, - a very attractive mulatto girl, who is a patient at his office. But when he told me he knew her name, and mentioned her name, I was altogether enchanted. - Mayflower Pye. Don't you think that's a lovely name. Come to think of it, why in the world hasn't some big old D. A. R. number, parading her excessive pride of ancestry, name her offspring Mayflower. I can't understand how they've missed that one. Perhaps I had better address a letter to the National Chapter at Congressional Hall in Washington, ere long. I shall be honored by the whole posse of Winks this week-end. Hummmmm. I wish Fatty would hurry up and bring me my unexpurgated skunks so I could try them out on the children.

The past few days of heat and humidity have made clover and various types of weeds jump mightily at old Arenbourg. I have accordingly busied myself to such length at the handle end of the hoe that I don't seem to have done any reading at all and what with one visitor or another after first dark, it seems that I have even skipped radio listening. I notice little Miss on Undset's Bridal Wreath came in the morning's post from the New Orleans Public, but I doubt if I shall get around to read it. I'm going to try to finish Ernest Pyle's Home Country, and by that time, perhaps something I really want to read will come to hand. The last page read from the Pyle book was about the fabulous Johnston-Scottie castle on the edge of Death Valley. It seems to me I heard on the radio a few months ago of Scottie's death. The description of the castle makes it seem like quite a remarkable and outlandishly situated edifice. But I must fore-go all this talk, for I see I am running out.....

2821

2853

Stephen Henry to his
2/27/48

Memorandum

February 27th, 1948.

One thing that's wrong with Central America is the fact that you can't find a cold Coca-Cola anywhere. Which reminds me that I actually heard a man say once in all seriousness that the trouble with Paris is that everybody speaks French.

And so, with this latest jewel glistening in the diadem of the Good Neighbor policy, I leave Latin American problems to those who are more intimately acquainted with them.

This morning it was warm and rainy. This afternoon the sun shone and the dampness continued. Heat and water produce a tropic, and that seems to be what we are heading into at the moment.

Paul Veidth appeared in the front gardens this afternoon about 3. He is visiting the Worsleys and they dropped him at the front gate, promising to pick him up after making a professional call up the river. The Madam and I were sitting on the front gallery, and Mr. V. joined us there. We had quite a pleasant chat. He told us that Mr. McMillian, formerly head of L. S. U. Library is now quite in his dotage. He remains on the staff as bibliophile or some such, but in reality is able to do nothing the university thus providing him with this form of pension. As I remember him in 8th Street, he was rather too young to have crumpled up so soon. The present head of the University Library is a Mr. Gladson, but every employee of the University from top to bottom is shaking in his shoes, for all the University jobs are subject to the Governor's favor, and it is feared that Mr. Long will sweep the place clean in May.

Within half an hour, the Madam was growing a bit tired, and so I parked her in the house, and invited Mr. V. to my house. We chatted much, - and long. Eventually I supper was announced and so he and the Madam and I dined together. After she had retired, we wandered over to Celeste's where eventually the Worsleys joined us for a highball. They asked me to go on to Cloutierville to have dinner with them and their guest, but I declined. Obviously Mr. V. and I had had our little exchange of thoughts and gossip for one day, and surely the Worsleys

2854

must have been tired.

February 29th, 1948

Belatedly, I caught up with the Battle of Gettysburg and heard it straight through last night. I found it a little brief and much too excitingly portrayed. I think they usually intend to give some hint of the major principles involved or some hint as to which of two ways the course of civilization might swing, as such events transpire. But I found little or none of this suggested, and I already knew that as a battle, it was a big and noisy affair. I notice they will burn little Miss Arc at the stake this coming Sunday, and perhaps that will be accomplished in less excitement so far as presentation of the things go. Personally, I should much prefer to hear her trial than to hear her fry.

My today's visitor did tell me one thing that will amuse you. He said he received a post card from the bayou the other day, with so much jammed on to it that he had difficulty in making out the writing, which was by hand. It was some inquiry about a book. Meeting him on the street a day or so later, Mr. V. complained to Mr. Kane that he would do better to dash off a letter if he really wanted to cram a chapter or two on a single card. But Mr. Kane said he had no intention of writing letters carrying three cents in postage when a penny post card would do as well. There's no question about it, that man is on the right track for making a million alright.

I guess the enclosures speak for themselves. Apparently the General must have got his business settled to his satisfaction, and probably Messrs. Rockefeller and duPont will hand him another bright new star in one form or another, - for his trouble. As for the New Orleans Public Library, I can't imagine why they sent me the enclosed card, for I haven't breathed a word to them about La Recherche although perhaps two years ago or so, before I knew about their catalogue for the bill, I did request "Swan's House". Poor old Xenophon must feel as though I am beginning to take pot shots at him in a round about way. Well, that will be alright, too. Maybe in the end he will capitulate in sheer exhaustion. I have always felt, however, that somehow or other the only man who should read the thing, Mr. Scourby, - will never be on hand when, - and if, - the book is acted upon favorably.

I hit off a lick to Madame Zweig last night, referring to you and A. L. by name, so if you should feel inclined to drop a line in the direction of old Stamford, your letter will not come as from one unknown to the lady.

2855

2855

old gardens in Natchez

Memorandum: February 29th, 1948. The whole posse of Wenks were here, of course, but there wasn't so much lava spilling out of the crater, and comparatively little damage was done. Well, to my surprise, the week end didn't turn out too badly.

The whole posse of Wenks were here, of course, but there wasn't so much lava spilling out of the crater, and comparatively little damage was done. They did persuade the Madam to accompany them to St. Francisville for the coming week end, and I was asked to write Mrs. Lester regarding the possibility of them staying at Waverly. I doubt if there will be much chance of them finding a place to stay what with the Natchez Pilgrimage drawing so many people through St. Francisville from New Orleans and points South. But that is there, a problem.

The Wenks left right after Sunday dinner, and an hour later Dr. and Mrs. Rand arrived. Mrs. Rand sat around with the Madam while Dr. Rand came over to chat with me. He told me his wife had a letter in her purse which he had mailed, and asked her to mail some time back. He asked me to give it some consideration. I know not its contents as yet, although I shall on the morrow. I suppose it has to do with the general tenor of his conversation during our sitting. He would like me to go to Natchez with him and some Dr. Wilson, I believe, from the Southwestern University. I know where the old gardens in Adams County used to be and I know some of the people who own them. I think they would like to explore places like even the remains of the gardens of Sir William Dunbar, Dr. Affleck, the Beaupres and Mantua gardens, and so on and so forth. Dr. Rand is interested in all kind of plants, but at the moment in camellias especially. I think I guess he is President of the Camellia Society. He will be enchanted with the camellias at Laurel Hill, of course, and there are a couple of huge ones at Hollywood plantation just below Egypt and Woodstock, the home of Judge Armstrong, and I reckon they might want cuttings from some of these.

I should certainly like to join them, but it would of course have to be later. We shall eventually see. Mrs. Rand told the Madam something that I liked very much. She said that "rs. Edgar B. Stearne, - daughter of

2822

2856

old Julius Rosenwald, you will recall, - and for whom Caroline has been planting a garden of native things, - well, - to return to the subject matter, Mrs. Stearne told Mrs. Rand that she honestly didn't care a thing about having a garden of Native Louisiana things but by praying Caroline to plant one for her, she was thus able to pump money in that direction without Caroline ever suspecting any element of charity. Mrs. Stearne says that the Dormons must never want and will not want if she has anything to say about it. Millions of dollars talk loud, of course, and so I guess the Briarwood set up is secure, - for which I am really delighted for their sakes.

As the randa left, Celeste met me at the side gate, and walked over to see the Madam. She told us that J. H. is leaving for Chicago in a day or two. He has an appointment in Florida for next week, I think. Surely, for a planter, he doesn't let any grass grow under his feet. Did I mention to you that in the current National Geographic which has just come to hand, there is an opening paragraph under an article entitled "Patented Plants," or some such, the opening sentence of which runs more or less like this:

"One day Charles A. Martin, while walking in his apple orchard in the historic Hatchitoches country, discovered a rare apple seedling. . . . I was puzzled when the Madam read me the sentence and I continue equally so after discussing it with Dr. Rand. Louisiana is not apple country and we have no idea why anyone should ever have an orchard in this region. Neither the Madam or Dr. Rand ever heard of Mr. Martin, and we can't for the life of us imagine how his insipient Burbank could be cultivating an orchard in our midst without any of us ever having heard of an apple orchard in Louisiana. I have no doubt the National Geographic knows what it is and two talking about, but I wish the article had been a little more specific in indicating Mr. Martin's residence."

The Randa brought me a nice bottle of wine and a luscious looking apple pie. I shall set the wine aside for subsequent reference, but shall attack the pie a little later tonight about the time little Miss Arc gets to sizzling on C B S. Was there, and with a cool glass of milk to top things off, the pie, - not la Pucelle, I thought to I was get along ever so nicely.

A great big old vase of marvelously yellow daffodills from Arenbourg are shaking gently on my desk before me. I like them for themselves, and for you. . . .

2828

2857

March 1st, 1948
Spring is but definitely here, if those old Purple Grackles are any sign. About two or three hundred thousand came in, blackening the skies tonight, and every mother's son of them nestling in the bamboo hedges. Sometimes they stay for about a month, after which the bamboo hedge is a wreck. Several darkies have passed this way to ask if they can try their luck, winging a few dozen of the birds with a shot gun. They claim they make wonderful pie. I wish they would take them all.

Paul Veith and the Worsleys came by again last night, rather later than is their custom. I had declined an invitation to Celeste's, but they had not. Three Holy Ghost fathers from St. Augustin's church across the river had arrived at Celeste's a little after the Worsleys. Father Calahan is leaving shortly for some kind of a philosopher's meeting in Copenhagen, and this was a kind of farewell call. I was certainly glad I didn't go. The Worsleys were glad to quit the place somewhat hurriedly, for the Reverend father, among other things, is a terrific bore.

Paul Veith tells me, - and you will like this, that Mr. Kane is being sued by somebody or other from this general neighborhood, for fifty thousand dollars. It seems in one of his books, - possibly Plantation Parade. Mr. Kane had something to say about the presence of cafe au lait blood in one family or other, and the lawyers representing the family have asked Mr. Kane's lawyer to have the latter's client advance the \$50,000.00 or the proof of his statement. I think it would be difficult to find many family trees in the South that was devoid of one or more of the milk-coffee traces, but Mr. Kane ought to be wise enough to set the fact down in print by naming any particular line. Paul Veith says the only way anyone can get under Mr. Kane's thick hide is by starting at his pocketbook. Take it the present suit is, therefore, headed in the right direction.

From the randa, I learned that Mrs. Pattison has or is developing cataracts, and is naturally greatly depressed. I must write her a little note of condolence. . . . But she has plenty of money and is sufficiently young to have them removed at the proper time, - so it might be worse, even though that be slight solace in her case for her.

Dr. Rand told me that many of the Alexandria ladies take their politics very seriously, or at least very vigorously, and that several of his and Mrs. Rand's friends campaigned with fervor for Sam Jones. On the day following Mr. Jones' defeat, one of these ladies came to the Rands. They asked her how she was feeling, now that the returns were in and it was obvious that her candidate had lost.

"You can't imagine how terribly I feel," she exclaimed. "Nobody knows, in fact, unless that woman, like me, has suffered from fallen political organs."

I guess I missed the first couple of minutes of the Joan of Arc broadcast last night, although I did hear the latter half alright. Based on what I did hear, the thing seemed terribly realistic. But, - and possibly because I didn't hear the first part, the thing somehow seemed ever so short, a little like a marvelous act from one of Shakespeare's plays, - but only a single act, - and I think one requires the complete play, - even though abbreviated, to experience the full value and impact of the piece.

I must re-read George Bernard Shaw's introduction to his St. Joan sometime. And then there is all that business in some book or other, - perhaps Le Procès de Jeanne d'Arc, which has quite a bit about the one great noble who defended her, - the same noble whom Charles Ferrault was later to use as his model for Bluebeard.

It sprinkled some before daylight this morning, but the balance of the day was mostly sunny. I don't know why Mr. Bachelier didn't come. I suppose he may tomorrow. So don't be alarmed if there should be a skip of a single day in these Memoranda, for I am scarcely ever alone when he honors us with a visit.

I am curious to know what, - if anything, - our Switch Cane on Arenbourg is going to do. All of it, and the quarter of a century old stuff here on Melrose, are completely denuded of leaves. Dr. Rand thinks it will all break out a-fresh from the roots, - we hope. I don't dare plant any at Arenbourg from Melrose, not knowing if this at Melrose is dead, - and I should certainly resist planting dead hedges. I shall have to wait until next winter to discover a delay which I regret, but can stand.

A tornado has been raging to the North West of us this evening and the radio sounds like a bunch of exploding Chinese fire crackers. I shall miss Lux Radio in consequence, but I shall operate my reading machine on little Marcel instead....

March 2nd, 1948
Memorandum:
The enclosure is among the more brief communications I have had in quite a while.

In these parts, everyone, - and I pause to knock wood, - seems to be suffering from influenza in a mild form.

Among others, Mr. Brew is down with it. What with in-coming mail being slightly on the slim side, I can forego his services easier at the moment than at some other times.

The rattle-tee-bang of last night's electrical storm played such havoc with radio programs that I could unscramble nothing, and so, after having folded up my beard for a while, I arose and had a go at my reading machine, - which for some reason, although it plays through tubes, doesn't seem to carry static. I was reading a thing called "The United States As a Factor in World History". It is pretty general, but I got a few interesting pointers about the doings of the American Commissioners in the Paris of Proud Destiny, and naturally did much thinking in your direction. I hope you were able to be reading something, too.

Something over an inch of rain fell, and accordingly everything was pretty soupy underfoot at Arenbourg this morning. But that made it excellent for weed-pulling, and weed-pulling I did.

I take it the weather was a determining factor in helping Mr. Bachelier to put off his Melrose visit for another week. That suited me to perfection. I had a crew of men working on a fence, and I wanted to stand over the job, both for the fencing itself and for the dishing that preceded the work, what with some leveling of ground and the filling in of some low places.

A somewhat indefinite letter from "The Association for the, or I guess The Louisiana Protective Association for the Boind, - from New Orleans, asking me to become a member. The letter didn't tell much about the organization and I know not what kind of a lobby, - if any, it furthers. It states that the meetings are held

2860

the first Tuesday in every month on some street or other in New Orleans, and it is alright if one, for some reason or other, can't attend every meeting. Now, so far as I am concerned, I can think of a few hundred reasons why no first Tuesdays in any old month would find me likely to attend, - not the least of which is the fact that I am always at least 300 miles away. But I may be quibbling. Anyhow, I shall write and ask them what their organization is all about. Perhaps they attempt concerted badgering on old Xenophon, and, if so, I might be willing to sit in the remote out-field and applaud.

Today's incoming Herald Tribune Book Review carries a notice of a new book, - on the front page, - a new biography of James Madison. I imagine that might be something to read. Frankly, I don't know much about Mr. Madison and should like to know more. The fact that he was a friend of Mr. Jefferson and the husband of Dolley Madison ought to recommend him. Did we ever talk about the movie, called The Beautiful Doll, - or some such, which seems to have been a life of Mrs. J. Madison. A good biography of that lady should be quite entertaining. I should think, and especially those widowed years when she dwelt in the little house on Lafayette Square, opposite the White House for so long.

My patient seems to have withstood the rigors of the week end, and looks forward to the impending week end without any misgivings regarding her proposed St. Francisville jaunt. I hope she doesn't catch the influenza which put Aurellia in the bed today. It is remarkable that she hasn't had a cold in almost two years, I think.

Eugene, the clerk, is creeping around with the same malady and his wife is in the hospital.addy wasn't at dinner today. Having taken Madam Regard, - with Celeste, - to "hrevertop to have the shoulder blade fixed up.

Celine's nephew, Tony, came by for a brief visit. They don't have a radio, but somebody must have told them that Governor Long is going to give everybody over 65 a monthly pension of fifty dollars, for Tony was "scuffling" about, hoping to find Celine's birth certificate, which in view of her age, well up in the 90's, will probably be somewhat difficult to locate.

So things turn in these parts, and what with the purple grackles having gone to bed and being a bit sleepy myself, I think I shall start folding up my own bed for the night. I sure hope you are alright. - If - yddol a to xodp - it states that the meetings are held

2861

Regard who had another painful attack of gall stones during Tuesday night. Godine and other ladies for dining, and I believe any relief was not long in coming. The lady doctor had been called during the night, and only by the use of the needle was she able to quiet the poor lady. Celeste, who always affects extreme modesty, in reality rather enjoys the center of attention, and was at the door, throwing about her arms and legs, scenes met me as I entered the room. It is so difficult to appear in perfect respectability. Poor Celeste! A letter from Lois Lester declares she will be so enchanted to entertain the Madam and party this week end. Accordingly I shall be comparatively alone at Melrose, as of Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

If my secretary had to be out of commission, it is lucky for me that his incapacity came when the incoming mail inclines toward the thin side. I went to his old cabin yesterday noon, finding him in bed. The house is of logs and has no windows, that is to say, it has no glass in the windows, merely saw openings that were completely closed by wooden shutters so that at noon day, it was darker than Egypt in the place, - an element in the treatment of influenza that would probably not be applauded by believers in the efficacy of sunshine. But the patient seemed to be improving and seemed cheered by the little notes I had secured for him from some of his friends, like Little King, who wrote a note for Peter and himself and from a Big Six and so on. Only last week end, some delightfully complicated medicines for influenza had come to hand, with many gagets for nose and throat applications, and these amused and delighted my patient, along with some other items that had nothing whatsoever to do with the sick room.

His grandmother, - Fugabou's mama, - which whom Mr. Brew lives, asked me if I would not assist her, should the boy try to get up and about before he was surely on the mend. "You, sir, will please chastize him," was the way she expressed it. And I am always enchanted when I hear run across Biblical words, such as Chastise" on the lips of darkies who are thoroughly unacquainted with the printed word. Automatically Mr. Brew and I both rolled on the bed with laughter at the thought of any film of chastisement, finally agreeing that he would submit without protest to the business, should he attempt getting up too soon, and that I would submit to a similar administration on his part, should he so foolishly as to catch the prevailing distemper.

On my way back home, I dropped in to see Madam Regard, and these somewhat provocative words: "Woman Happy" - making me wonder if it meant in life or death...

1383

2862

Regard who had another painful attack of gall stones during Tuesday night. Codine and other tablet form drugs having failed to effect any relief from her suffering, the lady doctor had been called during the night, and only by the use of the needle was she able to quiet the poor lady. Celeste, who always affects extreme modesty, but who, in reality rather enjoys the center of emotional scenes, met me at the door, throwing her arms about my neck in unmoistened sobbing. It is so difficult for one to attend to the ailing when one's servants fail to appear in perfect regularity. Poor Celeste, forever trying to effect Harper Bazaar attributes one untutored colored servants who haven't the vaguest notion as to what she is about or what she has in mind, and who invariably end up by flying out at the slightest provocation, or at none at all.

During the afternoon, I talked with Dr. Rand, inquiring about Mrs. White, his mother-in-law, who is currently in the hospital for a check up. She is doing alright, in spite of her 85 years. Dr. Rand, I think, said that Ed. Rand was bringing me plants tomorrow, but of what nature I am not sure, but I assume they may be those I ordered in October. It is pretty late to plant anything but the magnolias, - Chinese and "randiflora", but whatever comes to hand, I shall stick in the ground immediately, in hopes that the favorable dampness will assist where the lateness of the season does not.

At supper, I was asked us if we wouldn't like to take a turn in his new car. We would, and accordingly went for a 25 or 30 miles spin to Perry, Cypress, Bermuda, etc., getting back home at first dark. I guess the madam enjoyed the ride and if she makes the St. Francisville jaunt of 150 miles each way without too much fatigue, one might assume, I suppose, that the hejira to Ashville would be the next logical step, and well within the scope of her potentials.

Alphonse's son, Bu-Bu, (like the t omitted from but) came to see me while I was doing things at Arenburg. He said he had recently been to Cheneyville, Louisiana, and while there had met a man, famous for his ability at fortune telling. The man inquired after my health and asked Bu-Bu to invite me to ride down to Cheneyville, - 50 miles below Alexandria the next time he should be heading that way. I don't know any fortune teller any place in the world, and I don't know a soul in Cheneyville, and so am wondering how that gentleman got my name. I need scarcely add that if I ever go to Cheneyville in future seasons, I shall most certainly be concentrating on the horticultural developments in that area, and in the graveyard of that place where, on a man's monument is carved these somewhat provocative words: "He Made a Woman Happy", - making me wonder if it meant in life or death...



possibly Boy's papa

2863

Peter said: "I done hear Wiley talk about Boy. He say he have a wife and a heap of child. That he is always trying to kill himself by falling in the water. And Wiley, on of a fish, at least that's what it looks like to him."

So much for the genealogy of Boy.

After supper tonight, while at the store, I encountered by chance, mentioned in last report on T. H. Williams versus Williams in the Knipmayer day and not especially redolent with refter news.

The good doctor did remark that he gets much entertainment from the singing that floats into his office in town, one block away from the Parish jail, where the incarcerated negroes go in mightily for group singing. I like that.

Having a harum-scarum friend from Little River, sentenced last week to a year and a day in the local prison, I inquired if one might visit the prisoners conveniently and if some little gift might be presented on such a visit. Dr. K. said facilities for visiting were ample and there would be no objections to little gifts if one omitted steel files. I shall.

Dr. Knipmayer asked me if Maince, familiarly styled Boy Balthazar had committed suicide on Sunday. I had to plead ignorance. Dr. Knipmayer explained that he had received a telephone call from Cloutierville the other day, - perhaps 10 days ago, the owner of a local store down that way declaring that Boy was there, after having been turned away by the lady doctor as not being ill, although Boy felt he was. Dr. K. was asked to visit Boy on his next round. On learning Boy had been hospitalized both in Pineville and New Orleans, Dr. K. communicated with both hospitals which reported that in spite of thorough examinations, they had found nothing wrong with him. I asked if they had lifted up the top of his head and taken a look. The doctor didn't know. But last Thursday I visited Boy while in this area and had given him some "anti-suicide" medicine. - Boy pointed out to the doctor that between Thursday and Sunday he would take the medicine faithfully, but if it didn't produce the desired results, I he would kill himself. I gather the medicine must have been successful.

Later I asked two or three of the Melrose boys if they knew Maince (Boy) Balthazar. None of them had ever seen him but said he lived a piece below the spillway, half down below Clemence's and Ezra's, far from the main road and hard by the river which makes a big loop at that point. Their minds, which is not to make up

So much for the geneology of Boy.

The weather remains cold and damp with a chilly wind out of the North East. But it is good weather for pulling weeds and at Arenburg weeds flew high in the big wind. The pear trees are in full leaf and the tiny mimosa look as though they are about to make up their minds, which is nice, yes, no.....

March 5th, 1948.

So there you have it, each sacrificing herself for the other and not liking it. But at least the Madam didn't propose the trip and had no axe to grind, while Sister, knowing she couldn't make the front gallery of any of the Feliciana mansions, was determined at whatever inconvenience to herself to force the trip. Dr. Wenke remarked to me:

In short, - what a business.

May I tell you that the world is alright.

I don't recall if I have ever mentioned the name of my son which Murphy's elder son is known as in reality the boy, Minnie is Murphy Junior, but for some reason was never called by that handle. His mother, sister of the present cook, Beattie, is named Nellie, but for some unknown reason is always now called Minna. And so it was and always has been during the past 22 years, that the son of Murphy and Nellie (Minna) Brown, is known to everyone in these parts as Junior Minna.

8285

March 7th, 1948

On their way back to "Arose", they stopped off for a few moments to call on the Ramas, and found them alright. Although Mrs. Asa's mother is still in the hospital, which doesn't sound good, considering her 35 years.

Had it happened, - and it didn't, - Frau Zweig, as a former resident of Vienna, would have been interested. On Saturday, I almost entertained the Emperor of Austria.

But the almost is important for two things intervened:
1st Like Louis XVII, the Emperor is without crown and kingdom, and
2nd, the failure of our telephone prevented his coming.

Last Monday, I wrote a couple of different ladies in Shreveport, remarking that the Madam would be in South Louisiana this week end. The Arch Duke, Otto, spent Saturday in that city. He chanced to remark to one of my correspondents that he would like to visit an old Louisiana plantation. She was enchanted and said he should contact me at Melrose. Along about 5 p.m., I chanced to be within ear shot of the telephone when it rang. The operator said Shreveport had been calling for some hours, but this line had been out of commission. I established contact, but, misere, too much time had elapsed since the call had been put in originally, the schedule in the meantime had been filled up, and so the Emperor and I failed in our meeting. And that's all there is to it.

What with the Madam and the Wenks scheduled to return to Melrose on Sunday night, I was a bit a little surprised to see them drive in about 6 o'clock on Saturday night. They said the streams around St. Francisville were so swollen that it was impossible to visit any of the old mansions they had planned to tour. They had a grand time at Waverly where Sister ordered an Audubon reproduction of his cockatoos, to the tune of \$60.00, reproduction by little Miss Lols. They did get over to Afton Villa, just up the road a bit from Waverly, and were shown over the place by Dorothy Mills Percy who restored it recently. She seems to have done an excellent job, going to the trouble of having chairs and sofas

2883

2868

upholstered in especially woven fabrics, copied from the remnants of patterns found in tatters on old pieces of furniture which still graced or formerly had graced this old plantation home.

On their way back to Melrose, they stopped off for a few moments to call on the Rands, and found them alright, although Mrs. Rand's mother is still in the hospital and quite depressed, which doesn't sound good, considering her 85 years.

As for my patient, she naturally was tired today, and still a little groggy, I think, from the sleeping pill which her daughter administered just before departing for Shreveport on Saturday night.

Although cool, there was plenty of sun today, and tonight a million stars dot the heavens. But it is raining around the neighborhood, according to the radio, and Jonesville, La., some 75 miles due East of us, is beginning to snadbag its levees along Black River where the water is about to slip over the top. I certainly hope Red River doesn't get to acting up.

From the enclosure, you will notice that Charles asked for, perhaps he didn't ask for, - but anyway, he got in response, quite a large slice of historical data for one Madame Carpenter of Clinton. I wrote him a young book in response to his inquiry, giving the salient architectural and historical features covering the Cane River plantation houses, - Marco, which is gone, Magnolia, which was burned but re-built, Melrose, Oakland, St. Charles, Cashmere and so on, as well as a few pointers covering the town houses enumerated in his letter. It was easy to toss off the pages, and it gave me employment on Saturday afternoon while awaiting my barber who never did arrive.

I know not how much education the radio affords our untutored colored friends, but I have noticed that many of them like to rattle off the advertisements they hear over the air, sometimes singing out the jingles, if things like chewing gum are set to a tune. This morning there was vast giggling and general merriment on the store gallery among the colored boys. They were just about bustin' at so ething one of their number, recently returned from town, had been telling them. It seems a colored lady, a maiden lady and pillar of the local Baptist Church, had consulted a doctor recently who acquainted her with the news that she was pregnant. At first the lady of color looked puzzled and allowed as how she didn't see how it was possible. But then a smile spread over her expansive features, and she exclaimed: "I'se sure been usin' plenty of that stuff to wash myself, and it must be true what that man say on the radio; 'Duz does everything.'"

2870

2869

How is life in the new world?

The weather continues beautiful and what with one and two, March 8th, 1948. I have been very busy lately, but I have managed to find some time to write you. I have been very busy lately, but I have managed to find some time to write you. I have been very busy lately, but I have managed to find some time to write you.

Thirty million times wouldn't be sufficient to tell you how enchanted I am in Arendbourg at the prospect that dawned today. The prospect of additional villas planting of delicious flowers and trees for the delights of additional perfumes and leafy shade to bless so many tomorrows.

And if a feeling of satisfaction wells up in the heart of the silent partner as to these possibilities, so also does an equal satisfaction mount in the hearts of the more loquacious partner. And, in all honesty, that feeling about the heart will be equally felt in the muscles, too, for the tractor will roll the more readily, thus conserving the man at the end of the hoe with additional energies to fashion further planting in spaces which otherwise might have been allowed to lapse for another season.

Arendbourg calls forth blessings. So does the partner. I am so glad you have been enjoying the memoranda of late, plus the enclosures. Like you, I, too, feel that Madame Zweig must be a grand person. Perhaps your paths will cross, and how much it will mean to her. As one cosmopolite to another, she will offer you a glimpse at yesterday, and your meetings will be surcharged with delights, I feel sure. I somehow thought of you both the other day when reading an article about central Europe. The Vienna of the Hapsburgs was so charming, German with a French accent.

Ah, me! and just that factor presents a little problem today when the enclosure from the lady puzzled and perplexed my Ethiopian secretary who doesn't do so well with Mme. Zweig's handwriting and who is quite up a tree when confronted by a different tongue. I believe I got most of the contents, although the spelling out of each word was difficult for the youth who had to struggle so hard to make out the individual letters. But sometimes the individual letters or even the words don't matter so much, especially when

.....

2870

one feels instinctively that all is well.

The weather continues dampish, and what with one big wake for a departed mulatto last night, and an impending wake for another departed soul, - old blind Dave Washington, a negro, on the docket for tonight, there wasn't too much activity going on about this bend of the river today. As for myself, I busied myself "piddling". I straightened up some sagging fence, made a couple of ladder fences, and although I never did take any prizes at carpentering, still I did manage to hit the nails on the head as many times as I did my finger, - which only goes to show that there really is a special God for fools.

Along about supper time tonight, the cook dropped a word that brought to my notice for the first time that some kind of an agreement had been made between the Madam and the Winks that the Madam would journey to Shreveport on Wednesday of this week. Of all the strange business these people can think up. Of course the Madam isn't treated from her week-end jaunt as yet, and it isn't to be thought of, - heading out for another hundred mile trip by the middle of this week. This morning she asked me if I would go with her to Shreveport if Teddy would drive us up. I told her I would go with her on the understanding that after assisting her into Sister's home, I would re-join Teddy, returning here forthwith. She seemed pleased that I consented to make the trip with her. My purpose was two-fold: 1st, I think she will feel happier if I accompany her; and 2nd, if I make the journey, she will not think she will need a nurse, who certainly is in no condition to spend days a hundred miles from home when somewhat under the weather herself, and all her family hanging by one uncertain medical thread or another, - and no sense about watching out for themselves.

I shall write Sister on the morrow, telling her she need not be looking for the Madam this Wednesday, and we shall eventually see when, - and if, - things shape themselves so as to make the journey advisable before the longer pre-summer excursion gets under way.

I should have been reading John Locke's Essay on Civil Government tonight instead of listening to Lux Radio, but I enjoyed spellbound instead, and can take up Civil Government tomorrow night, for I have meager fare in the reading department, - just a heap of religious novels of dubious worth and slight entertainment value.

May I speak once more for Arenbourg in calling forth blessings for such a season of amplitude, and may everything grow with abandon for us-es....

2871

Bachelier 3/8/48

Do you recall my friends, the twin Brahmin bulls, named George and Jim, who were the first to be killed by the front gate? Well, I'm sorry to report that poor Jim frolicking with another and bigger Brahmin bull today, got his leg broke, and so must be withdrawn from circulation. Every morning when I go to the Post Office, George and Jim are waiting for me by the front gate to have me rub their ears a bit and to slobber their noses over my fresh clothes a bit. George will be on hand tomorrow morning as usual, I guess, - and I liked to see each of the twins equally well, but both George and Jim will find the front gate a little lonely, I guess.

It rained again today and accordingly I devoted myself to straightening up fences and pulling some weeds. The pear trees along the Arenbourg drive have such not very pretty delicate green-brown leaves. I am convinced they are going to do a heap of growing before the hot season opens up. Three of them are a later variety, and if two of their leaves haven't burst as yet, although the buds are so full, I am sure they will probably open before morning. You will be interested to know that the mimosa tree are swelling nightly along their branches, indicating that their fern-like leaves will also be putting out shortly, and if they grow portionately this Spring with last year's record, they will really keep up to our expectations, which are high.

Perhaps I had better pass over all the gradinas, for they all wear black-black leaves, and probably are dead, but I am not going to pull any up, hoping against hope that they may by some miracle put out new growth. Since this year as the worst in 47 years for a crop of longed freeze, next attempts over the impending for half century ought to fare better. Only I hope we haven't lost any time. ...

1783

2872

The Madam spent half a day, looking over the book catalogue you sent her in today's mail, and she read me the clipping about the strip-tease doings and duckings at L. S. U. Both J. H. and Doctor Eleanor say they have seen that bag perform, and they say she is really quite good, if you must have that kind of an act. It seems to me that Dr. Eleanor remarked that Stormy, I believe that's the bag's name, usually has a parrot to assist her in performing her act at the New Orleans' night club. I believe the parrot is trained to assist the lady in pulling off first one garment and then the next. "There is no accounting for taste", said the old lady, as she kissed the cow.

I saw J. H. at supper tonight and he had much to say to tell me about the funeral he attended at St. Augustin's Church yesterday evening for the late Felix Kirkland, a prominent mulatto citizen of the Melrose area. The service was conducted by one of the younger Holy Ghost priests, and most of his sermon, remarks or whatever, seemed to be directed primarily at Felix's widow, Miss Sweetie, and their several grown sons and daughters. The burden of the remarks was not toward consolation, but rather in declaring everyone should realize that the poor departed Felix was at that very moment suffering all the torments that await one in purgatory. He said the prayers of the family for the repose of the soul of their dead father and husband were alright, but that they would "cut little ice", since only by an appeal through proper channels by members of the St. Augustin clergy would Felix ever be transported from Purgatory and offered a real hope of reaching the Pearly Gates. Ample numbers of Masses, it was said, might turn the trick, but otherwise, what with the family prayers, individually or collectively meaning nothing, as petitions addressed to Heaven, poor Felix would simply remain in torment. "Don't you think that is a lovely way to console the grief of the dead man's kinsmen. And just to think that all the priests in this Parish are Holy Ghosts. Well, Lord help us from any Holy Devils.

From the enclosure, I take it - Mr. Bachelier must be off under the weather. So many people have had the sniffles and Aurelia, returning to her labors today after a week's absence, announced that her brother, Albert, the idler, got them flu and perhaps Mr. Bachelier has, too. As for myself, I seem to feel as fit as a fiddle, and am glad hoping the rain may soon let up a little so I can get on with my fiddling at Arenbourg....

1783

2873

Charles L. 3/10/08

Some time back I wrote about the March 10th, 1948. I believe the date is correct. I believe the date is correct. I believe the date is correct.

Memorandum: The New Orleans specialists have ordered her to close her Cloutierville house and depart for six months of quiet. I know not where.

The New Orleans specialists have ordered her to close her Cloutierville house and depart for six months of quiet. I know not where.

And when autumn rolls 'round, if she is on the mend, they recommend that she dispose of her Cloutierville property and, if she feels equal to 'nob work, associate herself with some institution or group of doctors where her labors will not be so arduous, varied and exhausting.

I learned all this from the clerk at the store this evening. It seems the lady doctor and her husband both telephoned me yesterday to say goodbye but I was at Arenbourg, and the clerk forgot to tell me to get in touch with them when I saw him later.

That things have come to such a pass, I am not greatly surprised, although I regret it exceedingly. The doctor devoted herself too whole-heartedly to every case, no matter how far flung and how insignificant, and her husband, while being ever so devoted to her, had no idea of how to smooth out the carpet leading to relaxation when the physician's shingle, at the close of day, had been taken down. Their joint idea of relaxation, after attending the sick from the high hills of Gornham to the river bottoms of Red River, was on a 35 mile radius, was getting out of the "go-carten" and hopping into a touring car, to drive to New Orleans or some such far away place. They had no measure of their physical limitations, hence this smash up.

But after a summer interlude, perhaps they will return all mended from their frayed nerves. Perhaps they won't. And I'm wondering if their property is paid for, and if it is not, if the former owners will take it over again. One thing is certain, the Wenks will never return to Cloutierville, thank heavens.

Some time back, I wrote Mobina about Mrs. Stearne enodwing the Dormons with monthly checks. I enclose her response, which I find characteristically excellent. I shall be glad if you will destroy it on reading.

My patient today showed increased signs of exhaustion, - or perhaps it was more the results of the sleeping potion her daughter administered to her on Saturday night, at a time when her weariness was at its greatest.

The birds were singing through the rain this morning, and hearing them in the garden, she remarked quite seriously to me:

"Hear those birds twittering. The poor things don't seem to sense that this is autumn and not spring."

Poor birds, poor bird.

An official of the Parish Health Service tapped
 on my door this morning. He asked where I should like
 to have him place a number on my house. I asked him if
 he had a good number. It was 74, which suited me
 alright. I pointed out a fine place on one of the
 cypress beams, jointly supporting the structure and
 the mud that insulates this dwelling.
 It seems the D. D. T. campaign is getting under
 way. This year the Federal Government will assume
 part of the costs, - 60 per cent, I believe, and the
 Parish 40 per cent, which in my old fashioned reckoning
 would make the thing 100 per cent, but it seems I am
 wrong, for there is to be a charge of \$1.50 for each
 individual house that is sprayed. But what with the
 wonderful results produced last year, when one going
 over the place eradicated mosquitoes for the balance of
 the year, I find the charge very reasonable. I hope
 a heap of my colored friends will, too, for now that so
 many of them have electric lights and no screens,
 the insect situation might develop into quite a
 problem, I should imagine.

and now I shall turn to my King James version for
a couple of go-rounds before folding up my beard, grate-
fully to God and to you that it sits along side me....

I don't remember seeing but one very interesting photograph of Mrs. de Kompaer, English, and was by a man named Williams. I can't recall if it was English or March 11th, 1948.

May I congratulate you on the elegant results of your undisturbed correspondence, as of Monday, the splendid results of which reached my true hand today.

How can I thank you for all the interesting things
- if you had to tell me the salient features of the rest
of Proud Destiny, your findings in that nice little
special room at the Public Library and so on and so forth.
I rapped up every line and loved it.

Although it has been sometime since I read the Bowers book, touching upon the entertaining of the Brannon Ruby W. Jefferson at Monticello, I am a little hazy about some of the details, but, if my memory serves me a little, the foot note in that volume regarding the published letters of la baronne stated that the edition in English omitted many or all of the letters touching upon her stay in the neighborhood of Charlottesville, whereas the German edition, - in German, of course, included all the letters. Perhaps you may eventually stumble over this German edition. At the moment, - should the American or rather the N. Y. P. L. might not have this German edition, I can't think where one might find it within easy reach. I suppose the Congressional library might have it, possibly some University library, but I'm sure we shall eventually discover a copy, and it will be fun exploring the impressions of that remarkable lady.

Everything you wrote me about everything you found in Proud Besting enchanted me. And everything I have heard about the various personalities sounds true to my ear, - except that I can't quite picture Louis XVI getting very much excited about anything, and I often wondered if he ever knew, in first hand, what the marriage of Figaro was all about.

Your mention of onseur d'Astolles rang a bell in my mind. Wasn't this man the uncle by marriage of Mme. de Pompadour, being her husband's uncle.

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I don't remember seeing but one very interesting biography of Mme. de Pompadour; - it was in English, and was by a man named Williams. I can't recall if it was English or American.

And did I understand you correctly to say that Lord Rumford married la veuve Lavoisier. How very remarkable, and I'm glad to know that. I know nothing about the lady although I saw someone portray her on the stage in New York, - possibly a Theatre Guild thing, - which had to do with the husband and wife just a short time before the Revolutionists arrested Lavoisier, and the thing was remarkably effective.

How can I thank you for all the interesting things you intended remarking while speaking of Mme. de Pompadour, that it was her brother whom, at her request, Louis XV created Marquis de Vandiere, a title which gave the witty salonieres of Paris an opportunity to refer to him frequently as le Marquis d'Avantiers.

Although it has been some time since I read the "Boswell" isn't it wonderful how old Monsieur Franklin's personality shines so brilliantly down through the years. He really must have been marvelous, and I am so sorry his autobiography breaks off before he makes his second trip to England, - the one he undertook when trying to patch things up for the colonists, along about 1765. He had been there before as a youth, perhaps about 1730.

As I recall, he undertook the writing of his autobiography while a week end guest at some country house in England, probably in the early 1770's, and I believe never added to it after having completed his visit of such brief duration. Once I read Bernard Shaw's biography but it is so long ago that I can't recall if he gave much space to his life in Paris, and again I must remark, as I suspect I have before, how remarkable that Mr. Franklin with his little house in Passy, should have been succeeded as American Minister by Mr. Jefferson with his elegant town house on the Champs Elysees, the men so comparable in mental gifts, their official surroundings in Paris so different.

After all my gay predictions about fine doings at Arenbourg, an icy breeze came out of the North West this morning, and tonight will be the coldest this year, it is said, - down around 12 or 14 degrees. Let's hope nothing happens to our little pears and tiny mimosas...

in my mind, wasn't this man the model of marriage of Mme. de Pompadour, being her husband's model.

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D. Miller 7/9/48

consider in regard to half baked manuscripts that are lying about. Mr. Carter, I know quite well, but whose identity, unfortunately, seems to have eluded me momentarily. I am a lady, and her sister is Mrs. Carter. She has promised to bring her brother-in-law to visit me this spring, but oddly enough I can't recall the lady's name, although I shall remember it readily enough when she shows in with her next undergarment project.

Memorandum: How nice, and what a delightful surprise, to receive your perfectly elegant report of Tuesday in this morning's post. Let's pray for more, frequent and more prolonged business meetings thither and yon. I can just about picture the situation when such meetings are not in session. I am thinking how much you will eventually enjoy hearing Dora do a number sometime on the scientific mind, and to his abstractions, salient additions can be filled in, as from past experience.

Wasn't it odd how we both such be sending or exchanging particulars about "Ghost Along the Mississippi" and about the Hapsburgs at the same time. I am enchanted to learn that Zita is alive and living in Washington. I have admired her so much from afar that I feel I should establish contact with her, now that she is within our borders. I reckon I might do so by way of her brother in Luxembourg, although that may be somewhat "round about", and perhaps I shall end up by dropping her a line direct. Had I only known about her presence in this country a month or so ago, I reckon I might easily have entertained her son over the week end, and as Melrose was practically alone in my hands, it could have been accomplished so easily and possibly with a degree of pleasure for the little Emperor himself. Well, perhaps we can do so at another time when we get Arenbourg to going nicely. Surely it would be pleasant on the connecting gallery, as between the Maison de la Reine and du Seigneur, with some intimate little tables, some tall glasses, a rosey sunset reflecting on Cane River, with you and Frau Zweig and L'Imperatrice, "dreaming our yonger yesterday's again" and sharing and fusing them together in the twilight of the soft summer's night.

I had heard nothing about the Art project for Washington Square South, and am a little puzzled as to why anyone should want to preserve the "southern side of that situation." Frankly, the South Washington square side never seemed either historically or artistically interesting to me, although the North side always appeared quite special and worthy of preservation, - so any way the thing turns will effect my feelings very slightly.

And thanks for setting me straight about the current doings of Mr. Carter and his associates. It is something to

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consider in regard to half baked manuscripts that are flying about. Mr. H. Carter is a brother-in-law to somebody or other whom I know quite well, but whose identity, curiously enough, seems to have eluded me momentarily. My friend is a lady, and her sister is Mrs. Carter. She has promised to bring her brother-in-law to visit me this Spring, but oddly enough I can't recall the lady's name, although I shall remember it readily enough when she blows in with her guest under her arm. I am so glad to know about his limited editions project, and I shall be the better fortified when discussing manuscripts, being thus made acquainted with what he has in mind to do. Everyone says he is a grand person and shall be delighted to spill a glass of wine with him.

Last night's cold snap gave way to much sunshine throughout the day, and although it continues cold tonight, the promise is for full Spring on Saturday, with much high thermometer reading and many showers, as of Sunday, which probably means Mr. Bacheffier will again be bogged down when Monday dawns.

How marvelous is your memory, - those little booklets of stamps of the various Chateaux which mainliber Svann sent us ever so long ago. I'm wondering if anybody ever hears from him, how he survived the occupation and how he fares during the present "cold war". I recall so vividly while sitting at his dinner table in the Montmartre neighborhood one night in the 1930's when he and Mme. Svann discussed the approaching war, and how they had many provisions for their son to be sent some 40 miles South of Paris in the event of hostilities getting close to Paris. I believe her father was living in some little property in the neighborhood of the Forest of Fontainebleau, where the child would be sent. They under-estimated the required distance for complete safety, and what do you suppose they did. If you should ever hear, I should be enchanted to learn.

I guess the enclosures are of not particular interest, but they will keep you abreast of trends. I can't really imagine the Wenks ever returning to Cloutierville after all the big social doings in Shreveport, but one never knows in which direction they might "bust out". One thing is certain, their return to this area would have a most disastrous effect on the condition of my patient. I shall continue to hope.

And thanks for setting me straight about the current doings of Mr. Carter and his associates. It is something to

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never had a whole lot of time to write for the little March 14th, 1948.

Back home I read a few chapters from Howard's "The American". This is the diary of a man who I have known since he was a boy. It is a very interesting book, no more ideas concerning the American "condition" to be found. I must eventually see the American "condition" in a new light. Full summer again, and I like it. It was a pleasant, uneventful week end, and I'm hoping yours may have been, too.

Charles came for dinner on Saturday, and the Rands dropped in while we were at supper. Dr. Rand had just talked with Dr. Nieseen in Lafayette, and had run up to see if I would be their guest on the Natchez trip, as of Good Friday, Saturday and Sunday (Easter).

I lied and said I thought we were having guests from Shreveport for Easter. I also inquired if that wouldn't be the high point of the Pilgrimage to crowds in the Bluff City. He said we would have no difficulty in finding a place to stay, as doctors are always provided with over night accommodations in hospitals. That was news to me, but it didn't alter my reluctance to head out. For many places whose gardens we shall want to explore belong to people who will be bogged down with house guests and running over with passing pilgrims. I shall advise him, - Dr. Rand, - definitely on the morrow that I shall not be able to go at this time. My idea would be to go in April after the pilgrimage is over, - and after my patient has taken her seat on some Carolina mountain top. The autumn would suit me even better, say October or November, but I certainly don't propose to head out during the current month. The Rands brought me a fine bottle of imported Sherry, which was certainly lovely of them. But since I don't care very much for it, greatly preferring Port, I cast about in my mind in which direction I should spill it. Peter passed by the house about first dark, and under a thin crescent of the new moon, and an astonishingly brilliant star, we marched down below the spillway to call on Ezra and his little girl, both of whom are just getting over a go at influenza. I thought the Sherry might taste better to him than anyone else, and I had some

Altogether, it was a very pleasant evening. I shall be glad to see you again.

harmless little chocolate cakes that Celeste had given me which made a nice little package for the sailing.

Back home, I read a few chapters from Howard
 Faust's "The American". This is the biography of
 J. Peter Altgeldt, the spelling of whose name I have
 no more idea concerning than does the man in the moon.
 I must eventually ask the American Foundation to
 spell out such proper names when, at least, they are
 the subject of the entire book. I thought of doing
 so recently when I read a biography on Tschikovski,
 or how ever.

But assuming Mr. Altgelat's name is spelled something like that, I have wondered for some time why I never used to hear his name mentioned in German American circles in New York, where one so often heard his contemporary German American politician, Carl Schurz, spoken of so often. I haven't reached the section where Mr. Altgelat is elected Governor of Illinois and comes to grips with the Federal Government on matters of workers rights to strike, which will probably not be too diverting, but is of sufficient importance in the growth of American democracy to make the reading of this life well worth while. I think Howard Fast writes exceptionally well but I must say there is a Rabelasian flavor that an occasional chapter exudes that could be managed a little less crudely.

at 1:30 and didn't return until after Charles MacCarthy was nearly finished tonight. But that was soon enough to enable me to enjoy the Fred Allen show. It's nice to know Maurice Chevalier will be his guest next week.

Payne Henry's wife, Frances, dropped in for a few minutes this morning. She was in New Orleans last week and stopped in to see little Miss Alberta for a little while. She found little Miss A. much distressed about the election of Mr. Long, and wondered why we let all those hill-billies in Natchitoches vote for him. But a more pressing problem confronted little Miss A. when Frances reached 825 Royal. It seems little Miss A. had somehow misplaced her upper and lower plates, and had no idea where to look for them. Fortunately Frances found them for her, so the owner wasn't bit by accident sitting on them.

Alors, as is said at the end of each of the Swann's House recordings: "La suite au disque suivant..."

To hand in today's post came two letters, one an elegant one which I have read with infinite pleasure, and a second which I have set aside until the morrow.

Before the postman drove up, Mr. Bacheller arrived from Little River. At noon time, I was able to absent myself for a few moments, when I contacted Mr. Joseph Brew, and thus was able to commune for a little moment with you. It is now past ten, and my guest has just returned to the big house. There has been a solid block - save the momentary intermission at noon, and while it has all been good, it has seemed to me so concentrated that my head inclined to rotate like the world is reported to do, slightly swinging back and forth on its axis. Never before did I sympathize so keenly with Peter Tschikowski when he used to hold tight to his chin with one hand as his other waved his baton in leading a concert orchestra, fearing it all the while that his head was going to drop off.

There are so many interesting things in your letter that I should like to touch upon, but I shall not get around to all of them at this sitting. It was good of you to tell me about some of the interesting articles that have appeared from time to time in Emis Ebony, - no copies of which I have seen except the one which you sent me when that magazine made its name known. It is characteristically generous of you to offer to send me some, but I think I would rather see you keep them so we may turn through them together at Arensburg. I am wondering if these wouldn't be worth binding as I recall it used to be rather expensive to have things bound in Manhattan, while down here it seems to me the job is executed much more reasonably. Offhand, - and I'm too tired to recall precisely, it seems to me there was charge for binding averages around \$5.00, which would cover an excellent buckram binding, titles in gold and the name of the owner in gold on the front cover. I have several such bindings, - old atches newspapers, etc.

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Before the postman drove up, Mr. Melrose should be more
 In the event, the Melrose Memoranda should be more
 irksome, both in bulk and in content, they, too, might
 thus be bound, and buried in the bottom of the steel
 trunk in this house or at the back of my bookcase which
 is not only locked itself, but stands in a locked room.
 I'm not sure you were able to preserve anything much
 of the Melrose Memoranda, but if so, and it is burdensome
 some, I throw out this suggestion as a possible solution,
 although I recognize that you may readily have other
 and possibly better, means of keeping it on deck.
 All this paragraph is merely a random thought passing
 through my mind which Ebony brought up, and I shall not
 go into further details at any time, should the
 housing problem ever present itself in your present life
 situation.

You mention Versailles, Missouri. I think I feel
 had not heard of it, but ought to presume the early settlement
 settlement of St. Louis by the French, - about the same
 time Wabash was established, I think. - say its
 around 1700, may account for the appearance of such a
 name in that region. I believe in the 18th century
 St. Louis was almost exclusively French, - I remember
 Jessie Benton mentioning the flavor of "European
 architecture" in her Memoirs. - Jessie Benton Fremont,
 but by the turn of the 19th century until today, I
 believe St. Louis is almost exclusively German in its
 hyphenated culture. I don't even of evidence of
 and may I thank you for telling me about the des-
 cendants of Dr. Hamilton on Long Island. I didn't
 know about his mulatto child before, although I had
 heard it rumored he was not quite 100 Anglo-Saxon.
 Such information certainly must give the girls of the
 D. A. R. one great big jolt. But I see I am running
 out, so I shall break off herewith, but not before
 saying thanks again for your nice, nice correspondence....

2883 Helen Baldwin

been wrecked by that type of thing-ism, and I'm sure too many hearts have been despoiled by the deterioration of a family to make his wife, - or husband, - always play second fiddle. **March 16th, 1948** Most people agree that by the clan from which he sprang. The family feud, maintained for generations by the Lantack, poor white Irish mountaineers is both ugly and foolish. I think the same is true when, after marriage, both contracting parties refuse to take each other as

And first off, may I tell you how kind you are to acquaint me with the particulars in Frau Reines bus Zweig's note. Wasn't that a laugh, - her reference to Mme. Mignon. I don't recall precisely how I

worded my last letter to her, but in mentioning the two eras of architecture on the Melrose scene, and using Estate stationery, I think I mentioned that Mrs. Henry occupied the large 1833 plantation home while I dwelt in the earlier 1760 home. I can't believe I ever wrote "Mme. Mignon" for Mrs. Henry and so I shall just assume Mme. Zweig read something into the letter that really wasn't there. Unsuspectingly she certainly made hilarious reading, and I thank you heartily for your kindness in passing it along, together with the other points in her letter. I have not made a response as yet, but expect to do so shortly.

And thank you much for so generously sharing with me your letter from Frau Fong's with me. To be perfectly honest, I must say I have little hope that she will ever win first place in her husband's mind. I would use the word "mind" advisedly. Time and again I have seen family solidarity stick tighter than marital ties. I recall such examples in times gone by; I witness flourishing examples of it every day from right where I am sitting. I am not sure I ever saw a woman win in such a struggle, even under most favorable circumstances, and I certainly think Frau Fong has too much stacked against her to permit hopes of even a measure of real success. But having so many times been wrong in my guess on any variety of subjects, let us hope I can be dead wrong in this one. But I don't think so.

How nobly and how wisely you expressed the hope that, - or rather the wish that more people, and especially those with good brains might espouse the better Zweig concept of values. On a slightly broader base, the nationalism she continues to nurture is perilously close in parallel to that same family enthusiasm and stupidity which is wrecking her own domestic hearth. I think too many nations have

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been wrecked by that type of jingo-ism, and I'm sure too many hearths have been desolated by the determination of one member of a family to make his wife, - or husband, - always play second fiddle to the more dominant tune blared forth by the clan from which he sprang. Most people agree that the family feuds, maintained for generations by the Kentucky poor white trash mountaineers is both ugly and foolish. I think the same is true when, after marriage, both contracting parties refuse to take each other as two parts of a single unit, but rather insist that, as in the present instance, the wife shall become something more like a prop or a branch attached to a group which, in the opinion of the husband, is ever so much more important than the wife. But such appears to be the opinion of this type of individual, and I doubt very much if that idea and center of real attachment will ever be altered.

You spoke of the musical by Rogers and Hammerstein. I have heard some of the music which seemed charming. "Dick" Rogers and I did some graduate work together one season at Nicholas Murray Butler's emporium. We maintained a perfect comradeship, for he knew a heap about one subject of which I was incapable of learning anything, and I knew a little about another course which was ridiculously easy but for which he felt no inclination, and so we really hit it off famously. I saw him last when he was doing shows with Mr. Hart, but lost sight of him when an ocean somehow got between us. He was a good egg and I liked him, although he had two bad habits, 1st, he reveled in mathematics, and secondly, he was forever chawing on his finger nails. His arrival in 116th Street in a great big Rolls-Royce suggested he had ample financial backing, and I believe he has added much to whatever money bags were kicking around at that time, by his subsequent musical successes.

Of local doings on the home front, my days has been a fairly busy one. Mr. Bachelier and I grafted some fine pecane buds on a couple of native pecanes growing on Arenbourg, so we may eventually have a fine crop some bright autumn of tomorrow. Mr. Bachelier returned home this afternoon. We did a great deal of talking during his visit, so much so that after I had folded up my beard last night, something felt awfully scratchy about my jowls, and it was only then I discovered that I had forgotten to use a razor, what with all the conversation which had gone on incessantly during the day.

The enclosure was an unexpected pleasure. I lied to my patient, not showing her the letter, but stating that I had received a telephone call, and had promised to call back, - if she felt up to the Saturday-Sunday visit. She did, and I accordingly wired. I hope we get some pictures....

2885

2885 Dora 3/19/48

David Eugene Smith - Lady Gray
The Gillelles
(Dress in Tragedy)

March 17th, 1948
Memorandum:

St. Patrick's Day and Uncle D'Or's birthday. I observed the former by working on the green terrace, and the latter by dropping by my old friend's cabin to chat with him a while.

I was enchanted, on leaving him, when I offered him a little gift, only to discover that he hadn't kept up with his calendar, and so wasn't aware until that moment that it was his natal day. He is among the sweeter people of 82 whom I have known.

Perhaps you heard the President's address to Congress at noon or the re-broadcast which was put on the air locally at 8:30 tonight. I disagree entirely with him as to the need for a draft or for universal military training. The military is too much in the saddle, with all the brass hats trying to create fat jobs for themselves. Mr. Truman, in my opinion, should have been devoting himself to make the United Nations function. After all, on a smaller scale, if Texas should decide not to cooperate with the rest of the 47 States, the 47 would be wrong in just letting themselves fall apart. If we must have a big army, - assuming that an attempt to form an international police force should fail, - and that hasn't been tried, then let's have a big army, a real one, but not one that is made up of 18 year olds, scuffling about, but of trained men. I can't tell you how many youths I know who have tried to join the army, only to be rejected, apparently on no other grounds than that those in control which to make it appear that the voluntary system is inadequate thus making it appear necessary to have the draft re-instituted.

Along about first dark tonight, Dr. Rand dropped by. He hadn't received my letter, declining his invitation to go to Natchez for the Easter week end. He seems very anxious for me to make the trip with him, even though I have sent him elaborate instructions as to how to get to all the old gardens he wants to visit. He says he is going to bring a nurse from Alexandria to look after my patient during my absence, so that I may feel perfectly relaxed whenever he and Dr. Heissen and I actually take to the road. He suggested some time after Easter. I thought perhaps autumn might be nice.

It was good of you to give me some account in yesterday's letter of the local press estimates of Dalton Raymond's "Earth-bound". It is the Madam's custom to read from her New Testa-

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ment each morning, after which, - during the past month or six weeks, she has been reading and re-reading from the Raymond book. I think she likes to go over the descriptions of the plantation country she knew so well. I can't recall if I told you something about the Raymonds, part of which came from the Madam, the other side light from J. H. The Madam knew Dalton's mother, - a Miss Schaffer, rich and cross-eyed. Her family had large sugar plantations on Bayou Lafourche, and the Madam's father supervised a crop for them once, netting \$90,000.00, and somehow or other, he was never paid in full for his labors. Miss Schaffer, having married Mr. Raymond, the Baton Rouge department store owner, they begot at least two sons, Dalton being one of them. J. H. told me that Dalton in his salad days, used to spend money ever so recklessly, such as putting on a special train to bring chorus girls to Baton Rouge, etc. I am under the impression the Raymond fortune has evaporated but completely.

And thanks for telling me about Dr. David Eugene Smith's demise. I knew him through two different approaches, - one through Lady Gray to whose house he came to tea in London, and with home I went to his apartment in New York for a tea or dinner of some sort. I also knew him through his brother-in-law, Dr. Jewett, whose country property adjoined that of the Gillette's around whom swirled The American Tragedy. It seems odd that I never read the Dreiser book, since I knew all the actual characters appearing in it, save Chester Gillette, the central figure, and Grace Brown, the girl he killed, and it seems odd that I don't even know the names which Dreiser gave these two figures in his novel.

There was another angle through which I knew Dorothy Gillette, daughter of the rich manufacturer and cousin of the poor cousin, Chester. Dorothy went around the world with a party which included an intimate friend of mine, and I saw both of them in Europe. On the same trip, having joined the cruise in Europe, was a Mr. Lincoln, journeying to India. This was the same man who had been sentenced to die in the Tower of London during the first World War, but had somehow escaped, and who later journeyed to Tibet where he became a Lama in the fabulous monastery of Ilasha. If you know anyone who has a copy of The American Tragedy, and would like a list of the real names of most of the characters, I would be glad to type them off to be pasted in the volume. The book is so long, I doubt if I would ever read it. I believe the burden of the story is to show what tragedy is inherent in a society like the American of the early 1900's, where wealth was so unevenly distributed.

Just one more word and then I must fold. You will be glad to learn that I was able to acquire a perfectly lovely Chinese magnolia, perhaps 6 feet high, for Arenbourg, today. Its blossoms are rather larger than usual, and a lovely white, just off shell pink....

2886
March 18th, 1948.
Memorandum:

Brace yourself for boredom. I am both tired and sleepy, - a combination which promises scant entertainment for the reader of a letter, tossed together under such circumstances.

In the road today, I met an ancient colored woman, thin and obviously about worn out. We both stopped to exchange greetings for a moment:

"How you dunn doin'," I asked her.

"Like you sees", was her response, - "Still a-wagging the Cross, but that's about all."

I must pass that along to Dora who rally ought to love it, don't you think.

I has been cloudy, windy and warm all day, and tonight all my windows and doors are open, with a good breeze blowing through, but it is still warm enough to put an electric fan to work. I bot a couple grandiflora magnolias today, and the promise of rain for tonight or tomorrow, impelled me to get them set out in a hurry, although the brisk breeze was no help, for wind is devastating at transplanting time. Somehow it has a way of drying the roots within a minute or two of exposure, so their struggle to get to functioning properly in their new setting is doubly difficult. But we shall hope the ill effect of the wind will be off-set by tonight's downpour.

Although it doesn't mean a thing by way of ultimate success in yesterday's planting of the lovely white-pale pink Chinese magnolia, that noble tree put out its tender new leaves during the night, the buds having burst between the time I got it into the ground last evening and my visit of inspection this morning at dawning.

At supper tonight, J. H. told us some local scandal. Half way between Melrose and Bermuda, is Ty-po plantation, the home of the Sam Tobins, where the gin burned last autumn. Mrs. Sam Tobin is a Prudhomme who married a pretentious, thick-headed hill-billy from the Montrose hill

2887 Ty-Pollantation scandal

region. The plantation and much cash thus came into the hands of a stupid husband and a somewhat gone to seed aristocrat. They have a couple of children and not much sense, and are doing all they can, - and successfully, to pile up so much debt that they most certainly will lose the place within a few years. During the past 24 hours, Mr. Tobin returned home unexpectedly, stumbling over his wife, at dalliance with the overseer. J. H. says the negroes on the place are all giggling when Mr. Sam isn't looking, and when he is, they are assuring him that they will be glad to assist him by working without the services of an overseer. "They're going to have the honor system on Ty-po" is the way J. H. explains it, with mock solemnity.

According to Irma Somperyas, who is a member of the Prudhomme clan, the Prudhomme always married back and forth within the family, cousins no end, marrying cousins no end, "feeling, in that way, that their blood would always be pure-pure, and never would the tar brush appear among the Prudhommies".

And the net result of all this concerted purpose has been the gradual decline of the Prudhomme mentality, the presence of Prudhomme mulattoes along the river, and now Madam Tobin taken unawares. "The honor system at Ty-po."

Today, being Knipmayer Day, the good doctor passed this way as customary. He had much gossip concerning local matters at Cloutiersville. He was there yesterday, and was guaranteed \$10,000.00 a year by one of the local merchants if he would take over the doctor's business, thus guaranteeing a physician in the community. He declined. He said he heard while there that Dr. Wenk was planning to return. The Madam sat upright, declaring in a firm voice; "I'll kill him if he even so much as thinks of such a thing." She had already confided to Aurellia, who Paul Revered it to me, that she certainly didn't want Sister any closer to Helrose than she is right now. I can concur with her in that point, even if she doesn't state her position in the matter to me.

And what with no doctor at present in the 60 odd miles between Matchitoches and Alexandria, Dr. Knipmayer said that his clinic this morning, - hard by St. Mathew's school, was filled to over-flowing.

He has a certain flare for names, and always passes along to me the ones that strike his fancy particularly.

I think you will like today's prize, even as do I. -

Honeysuckle Rose Mettoyer.....

March 19th, 1948: Today when his relative to the U. S. recommended a reversal of the policy for partition which Friedman, who had anyone else had insisted on putting over a few months back.

Another busy day, busy like a squirrel, hopping
into its revolving wire wheel, spinning like mad, and then
coming out at precisely the spot he entered, having
gone exactly no where. But I guess that is slightly exaggerated, for I have
did spade like mad in the dawn's early light at Arenbourg.

The weather man slipped up on his predictions about the rain. The spanking breeze from the Gulf blew all our rain clouds slap into Kansas, dumped out the water, and then rushed on to Missouri and Illinois to tear up the country side with a big old tornado. Net result: No water on our fine new Chinese and grandiflora magnolias at Arenburg. But I did the next best thing: I got me a couple of buckets and toated water from the river, so perhaps everything newly set out will have a fair chance to make it.

Last Sunday Cleste told the Madam and me that a friend of Caroline and "Ole Virginie" Dormon had said she had just had a card from Briarwood on Saturday, saying the girls would be down Hatchitoches-Melrose way during the current week. Caroline usually comes to Melrose and "Ole Virginie" usually stays in town. By first dark tonight, - Friday, - Caroline hadn't shown up as yet. I hope she doesn't make it tomorrow when Helen and Carolyn are here. "Only two people can talk" is the Madam's line, to which I invariably add, "excepting Caroline, yabber Dormon and Edith yett - oore, when only one can".

For a long time I was curious to see what would happen if the two of them ever got together. I found out when the two of them found themselves at Briarwood, E. W. M. was flatted out in the bed for days.

From the enclosure, you will note that even though we don't see much of the Briarwood belles, we needn't necessarily assume they don't get up and down old Louisiana.

2888

2890

Today Mr. Truman's Palestine chickens came home to roost when his delegate to the U. N. recommended a reversal of the policy for partition which Truman, more than anyone else had insisted on putting over a few months back.

And Cris Coffin, out of Washington tonight, read from the minutes of the Pecora investigation of income tax manipulations covering the late 1920's and early 1930's, wherein the present Defense Minister, patron of the Arabian oil companies, testified that he had formed all of various Delaware and Canadian corporations with a view to paying as little income tax as possible; when income taxes were certainly favorable to the rich. I'm sure everything he did at that time was within the law, if only sheer legality is enough; and it isn't. As for the

the next day, "if we live", as the darkies say, until the next January 20th, I shall be 60 years old. I shall be 60 years old.

What with week end guests in the ofing, I asked Aurelia to give my house a thorough going over today, and that induced me to set things in order in my armchairs, after she had finished with the outside. Much to my delight, I discovered two very gaudy red neckties with white polka-dots and a couple of bottles of Woodworth's perfume which somebody or other, - Dora, I think, had sent me at some time or other for general distribution. The fact that tomorrow is March 20th, and the first day of the twins, - Little King and Big Six, - this discovery was just like something dropping from the clouds. Poor Aurelia, she doesn't know when she was born, and so always misses a real birthday. I think I shall discover a magical date for her one of these days, and so for the first time in 25 or 30 years, she will really have a natal day. She asked me to write a letter for her today. I wished I had saved a copy of her dictation; it was so unusual. It was to the lady doctor, - currently in New Orleans, and among other things it asked her to kiss her own hand in Aurelia's behalf, she had been so good about putting Bessie and the baby on their feet. I was enchanted to write the letter and send it off, but I blushed a little to myself, since I, myself, haven't written one on my own behalf as yet.

And so the week plays out, - Arenbourg a little further along the way, and you not too worn out with guests, I hope. But please don't try to write during all the doings....

2889

2891

D. Eleanor
about 3/18/48

March 21st, 1948. The day is fine and warm. I am feeling better. I am feeling better.

Memorandum:

Nothing is so successful as success, they say, and it is heralded about that Harnett -ane is successful. Perhaps Luck plays some part in it. Perhaps chicanery, coupled with unscrupulousness, likewise assists in tipping the financial scales in his direction.

The latest story comes from a responsible person living in Marshall, - one of our week end guests. She says a rather elderly lady in Marshall has some very interesting and very valuable papers, memories and documents, covering the life of some American lady, born at the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg as a starter, and moving through an existence in Europe and America that is really fascinating. Somehow Harnett -ane learned of these papers which the lady has been working on for some time with a view to eventual publication. He told her quite frankly they were so valuable she should let anyone see them, - after he had. And further, he told her that if she wished, he would have them copyrighted, so that no one could ever claim them for their own use, should they come under another's notice. Of course the poor lady doesn't realize, and no one can convince her, that nothing can be copyrighted without publication, which is part of the process. Naturally, if she gives Mr. Harnett the right to copyright the material, she will automatically be giving him the right to publish. And so it appears that he has another book already prepared for him, with little left for him to do but polish it off a little and ship it along to Morrow and Company, - or whoever may be his next innocent or guilty partner in crime. Isn't it wonderful how he maintains such a steady course in his skulduggery.

As for the week end in these parts, it was good. Helen Baldwin's car was stolen and wrecked just before she was about to start out, so instead of arriving here at 3 on Saturday, they didn't come until first dark. They left Sunday noon, making it a very brief stay, but a very pleasant one of

2892

Helen thought Carolyn had cameras and so did not bring any, and Carolyn thought the same of Helen. No pictures naturally were taken. But they plan to return in late April or early May well equipped with photographic material, and perhaps we shall be able to do something about Cane River, I hope.

They brought some clothes, shoes, ties and whatnot, and surely at an opportune time, for they will help many a soul so timely before the impending week end gets here. I shall be busy making distributions about tomorrow and Tuesday nights. I'm glad there is a big old moon this week. It will help.

J. H. learned last week that his mother would enjoy Ghosts Along the Mississippi, and so he got it for her on Saturday. It really is a lovely book, splendid pictures, although a little sad in places, with an exceptionally fine text. You will enjoy turning through it when next you visit the book mart.

I am finishing Mr. Fast's The American, tonight, - I hope. I think this life of J. P. Altgeld(?) is a good book, and its picture of the crass disdain of the humanities by the giant captains of industry in the 1890's, together with the inception of the reform and socialist movements in American politics is excellent. But I still think Mr. Fast could soft peddle some of his gutter-snipe expressions without altering the strength of his story.

I hope you had a free moment to hear the Fred Allen show. The songs Maurice Chevalier sang didn't seem to be the best that might have been selected, but I thought the comedy was hilarious.

The enclosure from the lady doctor speaks for itself. No-name and Cyclops are the two kittens she gave me. Peter passed this way this afternoon. He said the lady doctor had come by to see me while I was at Arenbourg this morning. He thinks she is staying at Magnolia. Oh, yes, I should remark that the character, "Pistaches", mentioned in her letter is that curious little dog with the ears like Chinese magnolias.

We appear to have moved into full summer. It is hot and we need rain. The pecan trees are beginning to put out leaves, and the darkies say the pecan leaves never get caught by the cold.

I suspect, what with guests in the neighborhood, you must find your time completely filled these days. Please don't try to write until you catch up with a breathing spell....

2893

2893

Ty-po
March 22nd, 1948.

Memorandum:

Three letters in this morning's post, one from the State Department, telling me it would be inappropriate for the Federal Government to approach Canada on giving extra territorial status to Campobello, which, oddly enough, I knew, - and said letter in response to my inquiry if Canada had as yet made such a move, - to which there was no response; - and two letters from you, only one page of which I got to read, since the plantation bell, by some confusion in timing, cut short all reading by calling Mr. Brew to work a half hour ahead of schedule. Accordingly you may understand how filled with pleasure and anticipation I am in looking forward to tomorrow's sitting with my Ethiopian.

I have another episode to add to the scandal at Ty-po plantation, as between the hill-billy husband, Sam Tobin, the gone-to-seed aristocracy in the person of his Prudhomme wife, and the hill-billy overseer, whom Sam Tobin stumbled over in dalliance with his wife.

I saw the Dark Duke and Jack Nelson at the gargas today, and as they live on Ty-po, I asked them how the plantation people were re-acting to the domestic flurry. They giggled a heap, and said the funniest this Mr. Sam did on uncovering the extra marital relation was to shout for all the negroes to come and view the spectacle, so the outraged husband might have witnesses. Naturally the negroes thought this was both unbecoming to the husband and definitely on the ridiculous side, since everybody with any sense at all in this region knows that no negro would ever "recall to mind" on their stand any particular at all which he might be thought to have witnessed when it concerned white folks.

But today's event in the untangling of this unsavory business removed all need for witnesses in

2894

the impending suit for divorce on grounds of adultery. For this morning Mr. and Mrs. Sam Tobin and Mr. Lecaze, the overseer, - all three ascended into Mr. Tobin's automobile and drove to Natchitoches, where they visited the proper legal agency of the law, and with dispatch secured a divorce, - injured husband, outraged wife and accommodating lover, all cooperating nicely to effect the desired end. Following the signature of the legal papers, the husband drove on to Shreveport to transact some business, and I know not where the divorcee and her overseer went, but I assume they returned to Ty-pq, and it wouldn't surprise me if Sam returned home for supper.

What a pity Mrs. Tobin's kinsman, Lestan Prudhomme, whose house they passed on the way to town, could not have been on the Cote Joyeuse to dip his panicky pen in the ink as they passed by. Although the Texas lilies were here but for a very brief stay, they did have an opportunity to chat with several of my friends, and they both remarked on how lucky I am to have the intimate contacts with the people of color which life in a town would make almost impossible. We all fell out laughing when we contemplated the fact that most professional Southerners usually pass themselves off as being the only aut critics on the negro and usually admit only that their superior knowledge is based on their childhood contact with some ancient Aunt Jemima, but hasten on to explain that they naturally are all opposed to having any contact with the negroes in a social or intellectual contact. Somehow it seems to me about as stupid a position as though I were to declare that since I was a bottle baby, I am the only person in the world, - I and other people who were nursed on bottles, - to give expert advice to the Corning Glass Company as to the quality of their products.

The weather is marvelous, and the rain that descended this mid-morning was precisely what we needed. By the dawn's early light, I examined the lovely new Chinese magnolia at Arenbourg. It's buds were swelling, but one never knows the fate of such transplantings. Following the morning rain, I returned to Arenbourg at noon, and picture my delight, and mild astonishment, when I discovered that the rain had produced a minor miracle, for in response to this manifestation of the elements, the tree had suddenly unfolded all its leaves within the space of two or three hours, and it was lovely. Still we had better keep our fingers crossed for the next couple of months....

2895

D. Miller 3/19/48

Memorandum:

Full summer, two-thirds of your two letters read, with the promise of the final third on the morrow, so naturally I am as gay as my neighbor, the old mocking bird, who is singing in tonight's moonlight, restive for tomorrow's dawn to carry on today's labors at nest building.

In response to your inquiry regarding the disposition of enclosures, I think your idea of attaching them to attendant Memoranda is good. That will enable us to consult them readily if we eventually decide to whip up some of the paragraphs in these notes. It's difficult for me to formulate a very clear idea of what sort of a picture, - if any, - some of this material might shape itself into, once it were pasted together. After all, as I scarcely need point out, these letters are not written for anyone but you, - and never will be, - save what you care to share with L. J., but, if by chance, they should end up by offering some kind of a blurred mosaic of fading plantation life of the 1940's, and of such a nature as to interest the casual reader of rural ramblings, then possibly we might conclude they would be worth our while to edit, out, and re-out with an eventual view to publication.

And speaking of enclosures, the present one seems to indicate that my last letter to Bergen Pines struck a bull's eye, and in so doing, almost knocked me off my base, since I had had not intention of being intent on such expert marksmanship.

I dropped the little doctor a letter the other day, thinking she would be interested to learn about the departure of Dr. Worsley. Quite playfully, I remarked I thought it would be ever so nice if a corporation of three might be formed, one person, - herself, - to attend to the bodily complaints of local patients, myself in the adjoining office on the door of which would run the legend: "Pseudo-Psychiatry", with a third person to complete the trilogy, whose sole job was to do all the work. But there is no danger of the lady heading out pell mell, for I notice she must have an old plantation

2896

house and a flock of live oaks to boot, and while the first or second might be secured separately, I can think of but one such combination, - possibly two, on Cane River, and they would scarcely be considered as on the market.

If Dr. Worsley, - come to think of it, - had not shattered her own future by over work, - I must say she and Mr. Miller really might have started something. But that is water over the dam, and I must say as much to the one good lady, and, in passing, be-stir myself to respond to the New Orleans lady doctor's letter forthwith.

I'm so glad you had such a pleasant little musical evening, as a kind of bracer before your Mr. Bachelier arrived. It's grand to appreciate each other's problems in this situation which, I gather, is practically identical in both our cases. The Madam is forever saying: "Just think how good it is going to seem when it is all over" - and that is a thought, too, but even so, it doesn't do much to keep my eye-lips open during the somewhat prolonged sittings.

I'm so glad you mentioned the "Hamlet" article in Life. I must cast about for a copy and digest the same. Every once in a while, I get a strange looking card, - I'll enclose one, from Life, which, with all the holes punched in it, looks ever so much like some kind of a 59th Street cross-town transfer. I have asked one or two people what it is all about, but no one can tell me. I gather it may be asking for a new address or that my subscription has run out or some such. In any event, neither J. "nor I have received our copies lately, and he was under the impression his was due to run for some time yet. I think he received none of the "transfers", but both our copies suddenly failed to turn up.

Nothing is so good as sleep, but I am sorry you missed the Truman speech, for even a speech of major importance although given by a second rate man, is better than reading it, I think. I caught up with the Socrates broadcast which I found excellent and much to the point, so far as my current literary paths go, for I had just been reading a symposium on Socrates and Plato, and the groundwork of the latter made a perfect setting for the former.

Alors, Mr. Poe's Raven, - or somebody else's, is tapping at my chamber door, and I must attend....

2897 Mary Rhodes

3/20/48

March 24th, 1948.

Memorandum: Full summer continues. It's hot and I like it.

If only some hint of Spring has started melting your snow banks, I shall be delighted.

It was grand to have the balance of your letter this noon, - only I sighed a little as I read of the probable round of activities that stretch out ahead of you over the week end, the following week, the ensuing month. Nearly everybody I know tells me they couldn't stand it to live buried off here on the plantation, not going to town for years at a stretch, etc., etc. But I honestly like it, and ever the more so when I think of the endless goings and comings incumbent upon those who dwell in great cities. The years I lived in them had much to do in trying to discover how I could get out of this invitation or that appointment. Perhaps I always inclined toward a monastic existence without realizing it. But even in America's great metropolis, there is the occasional opportunity to get out into the country once in a while, and I am hoping that if you do run up to Bear Mountain, there will be a heap of recompensing diversions along the way, with gobs of sunshine thrown in for good measure.

I know it will be nice seeing Egon again. Doesn't it seem ever so long since your paths crossed. I shall be delighted to learn how he is doing and how domesticity sets on his brow. It would be good to hear your conversation and enjoy the sallies of humor which, I am sure, will readily brim up to the surface.

In today's post came the enclosed letter, which will interest you as a prize example of how people can create wonderfully distorted conceptions of other people's motives, once one's mind has been set to the task. How in the world do you suppose the idea got abroad in Natchez that I was mad at the town or its citizens because of some imagined slight. Personally I always thought the people were perfectly lovely to me, and I could gladly bust the bag who tries to explain my absence by attributing such a far fetched reason.

2898

I nearly forgot to mention that the tapping on my chamber door last night, just as I concluded my Memorandum, wasn't Mr. Poe's Raven after all. It was Ezra. I remembered later that I had left a message for him to drop by to look over some plunder, and that is why he came. From the package which Helen Baldwin brought, we found a fine pair of extra high topped shoes that would fit Ezra's son, Lee. And there was a good outing work shirt for Ezra and a nice russet dress for Doreatha. Naturally Ezra was enchanted, especially with the shoes for his boy, for shoes in local stores remain of a very inferior nature, looking like leather if the day be bright, but turning into "ersatz" should a shower of rain develop, and Lee had recently worn out his new shoes in a single day's jaunt to school and back.

We had a glass of wine and Ezra told me a rather amusing story about Sam Tobin. During Army war games in this area about 1940 or 1941, a soldier, hoping to hitch-hike to New Orleans from the Cane River country, encountered Sam Tobin dozing in his car, which Sam has the habit of parking along the highway if he has been drinking a little too much. The soldier passed the time of day with Sam, told him he was hoping to catch a ride to New Orleans, etc., whereupon Sam said that was just where he was heading for, and he would be glad if the soldier would like to ride with him. As Sam was mighty sleepy, however, he said he would be glad if the soldier would drive a piece. The soldier accommodated him. Several hours later, and at 5 a.m., the soldier awakened Sam, thanking him for the ride, and said he must get on his way. Sam gazed about the neighborhood, not recognizing the locality, and asked the soldier where they were. "New Orleans", was the frank response. "Well, I'll be damned", was Sam's surprised response, and after the soldier explained how they had arrived in the Crescent City, Sam declared he couldn't remember having wanted to go there, and so the only thing for him to do was to turn around and drive back to Cane River. Ezra thought it was lucky the youth hadn't said San Francisco or some such point when first meeting Mr. Tobin.

I walked part way home with Ezra, the night was so pretty, the moon so big and the air so soft, and he naturally slept but completely on my return. By this same post, a little package goes forward bearing the senders name as C. G. G., but I think I shall not have to indicate to you, as I should have once to Dora, that in reality, C. G. G. is not the sender. I only hope it arrives in good time....

2899

Memorandum:

I begin this note a little later than usual, what with people dropping in unexpectedly after sundown. You will accordingly be charitable if tired words make tired reading.

It has been hot-hot and humid, with a promise for rain on the morrow, but from where I sit a million stars are twinkling in a cloudless, moon drenched sky, so perhaps my labors at Arenbourg today were slightly vain.

But regardless of tomorrow's weather, the spadding I undertook around the crepe myrtles, in the semi-circles at each of the elephant traps do or does no harm, and in the event of rain, the benefit will be considerable.

After a go at things at dawn, and another this afternoon, I found ample entertaining to do at Alrose, - the Knipmayers in the morning and a flock of pilgrims and old acquaintances until now, which is vaguely after ten.

This morning I gathered you and me a big bouquet of white German iris which at this moment are gently quivering in a big old glass vase on my desk before me. I say us because it is getting close to birthday time, and I like to think that you, in spirit, are sharing their fleur-de-lyse (with an accent) fragrance with me, for in reality they are ours and their calm purity is so magnificently appealing that I know, were you here in person, you would delight in them as much as I.

The Knipmayers had little news, but they did demonstrate how "in-side-out, wrong-way-around, other-end-to," people can get mixed up when scandal gets to swirling. They asked if we had heard of the Tobin affair. We had. But we were astonished when they told us they understood Mrs. Tobin was the injured party, having, according to their information, discovered her husband at dalliance with the wife of the overseer.

Finally I got that untangled and straightened out in their minds. Later came some other information that was equally illustrative of how mis-conceptions can run wild.

2900

It seems there is a negro living between Bermuda and town, and well known in Watchitoches, named Billy Lecaze. Accordingly, when the news of la Tobins' doings with one Billy Lecaze, - the name of the Ty-po overseer, - white, of course, the whole town, not knowing the latter, spread the news that it was the negro Billy who was the party of the third part. Naturally the town was all a-gog, and the proud Prudhommes were in the depths of humiliation.

Only one point more on the whole shocking business:- it seems the overseer has a wife from whom he has been estranged for some time. What with this present business suddenly coming to the fore, Mrs. Billy Lecaze is starting suit against Mrs. Tobin for having alienated Mr. Lecaze's affections. Now that really ought to give the Mirror and the News a real field day.

After five o'clock supper, J. H. took the Madam and me for a little ride through his Cognac plantation. The bayous are so pretty now, what with the tender greens of the cottonwood trees blending so gently with the tattered gray moss that chokes the water courses.

It was dark before I got into the midst of taking off my beard, and while in the midst of it, who taps on my door but Donald Worsley and Paul Veith, up to Cloutierville to get another load of plunder from the lady doctor's residence. Most of the talk was about an old diary I have that Paul wants, a subject which he brought up and which I finished not precisely to his satisfaction. I shall refer to this somewhat curious case at another sitting. Paul told me that while he liked Dr. Eleanor alright, Don was really the apple of his eye. I presume Dr. Eleanor may be on a slightly more elevated intellectual and cultural level than her present host, wife and offspring, but it is possible that the preference lies in the fact that she may not be too enthusiastic about Don, a trained engineer in a town booming with business, is taking out an Educational program under the G. I. Bill of Rights to assist Mr. Veith. At best, the whole set-up in New Orleans seems quite mad, and I can't imagine a house rocking with the racket of five nossey children being the best retreat for one suffering from nervous exhaustion. But that is merely a personal opinion.

After the Worsley-Veith contingent had departed, Mr. Brew, Peter and Little King came by to talk about the day's doings at ploughing. Mr. Brew had turned up a lampeel with his tractor buster, and there was much discussion about the animal or reptile or whatever it is, - and so on and so forth. I'm not certain if this will reach you on your birthday or not, but if so, - well, let's pretend that every day is your birthday, and you know just how happy they all are.....

2901

March 26th, 1948.

Memorandum: To the Honorable Mr. [illegible]

Your nice letter of Tuesday to hand, and my delight was doubled by the surprise element, for I had not expected to hear from you somehow until after things on the domestic front had settled down considerably, following the advent of your guest. How nice your account of your dinner sounded, and I'm glad you had Egon with you, for I know that he added much to the general amenities. And how nice to learn that he is gardening, and has already sighted so many signs of Spring, - robins, bluejays and cardinals. Although, come to think of it, perhaps only the robins constitute a sign, since down this way, at least, the bluejays and the cardinals remain with us all winter. I didn't know that Cardinals were to be sighted on Staten Island at any time, and especially at this season. In full summer, a migratory bird, called the Scarlet Tanager, is an annual visitor, but I hadn't realized before the Cardinal came, too.

It was a pity you had to pass by Sunnyside so close without any opportunity to drop in for a little visit. But in such instances, and they have been too frequent in my own life, I always console myself in believing that it is better to pass such delightful spots by, on the confident belief that another opportunity will present itself, and possibly under more auspicious circumstances.

I laughed in my beard at your account while at Greenwood of having twice been called by the name of another. Your exclamation is so correct: "What am I doing?" - and how often does one observe the same type of operations in this area.

I love the clipping, and the reference to The Anniversary Song is quite to the point in reminding me of what I heard on the radio last night, quite late, at some old station was playing records, dedicating this piece and that, - in the boogie-woogie department, to various and sundry persons. Then the announcer remarked the boogie-woogie would give way for a "long haired" piece.

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2902

The Anniversary Song, - "dedicated to Mr. and Mrs. Somebody, for their family was celebrating a double anniversary, Thursday marking the two week's anniversary of their wedding and at the same time the birthday of their 4 year old child. Then the music started, - "Oh, How we danced...." - only to be stopped, while the announcer apologized for having twisted the marriage and birth days, - after which the racket continued.

Today, being Good Friday, there were ample evidences of the presistence of superstition concerning the day in this locality. Peter passed this way just at dawn. I told him he need not feel impelled to work today, - it was a general plantation holiday in Louisiana, but if he wanted to, I would pay him for his time in running the tractor at Arenbourg. He said he would be glad to help me out, doing anything up yonder, except running a plough. The old saying, "Blood follows the furrough on Good Friday" still hold steadfast, even among non-Catholics. Of course what I wanted was the terrace ploughed, and so we decided to do no business at all.

Alphonse's boy was going to open a new little honkey-tonk on their place hard by Arenbourg tonight, but remembering the day, decided, I suppose, that "Blood might follow the bar", as well as the furrough, and cancelled his opening until the night before Easter, - 24 hours later.

I labored mightily during the early morning hours at Arenbourg, opening the ground as much as I could get to, around crepe myrtles, etc, anticipating a rain by noon. The rain eventually did arrive about 4 p.m., and so all, - or at least a lot of the things up yonder are now having a nice long drink, - and growing mightily on the same, let us hope.

I saw Ezra at noon, and he said he would be glad to plough for the entire afternoon, if I wished, but I had already heard from his wife and the children, while at the store, that they were hoping Ezra would take them rishing this afternoon, and so I declined Ezra's offer, ut I did make a round with him to look the place over, point out what not to plough under, and turned the matter over to him to carry out whenever during the next week and so on each succeeding month during the terrific season, - and greatly saving a lot of energy for me to devote to closer cultivation of growing things instead of exhausting my energies on trying to keep the terrace within grasp.

This obviously will not reach you by Easter, but it may come to hand on another date, and, if so, may that special day be ever and ever so happy.....

1083

2903

Sketch of F. Hand
1. 1. 2. 3.

March 28th, 1948.

Memorandum:

It's been a lovely Easter Day in these parts, - clear but slightly on the cool side. I hope you have had as much sunshine and a measure of the quiet I have enjoyed.

I can't imagine why we had so few pilgrims over the week end. Perhaps everybody was heading toward Natchez, and having arrived there, lingered on. Pat was up from L. St U., - the only one to add to the usual faces about the board.

I think I mentioned that supstition impelled Alphonse's boy not to open his honkey-tonk on Good Friday, but apparently the negro impulse to frolic go the better of their hocu-pocus fears, for sometimes after dark on Friday night, the honkey-tonk responded to the couple of hundred residents who wanted to swing out. Ice beer accordingly came to the fore and an electric wire was run from Alphonse's house to the new shack, thus setting the electric gramophone in motion so the gay young blades could swing out.

I had long since folded up my beard and in spite of considerable static, was bending my ear into the radio to catch some of Henry Wallace's speech. On Saturday Dan Henry was complaining about the racket from "The Melrose Social Club", and expressed his astonishment that I hadn't even heard a peep, since my house is nearer the noise center than the big house.

I suppose he would have had more to complain about on Saturday night, since that is usually more filled with merriment than Friday, - but a tornado somewhere to the North of us carried off the high tension wires around 10:30, cutting off all electric current until Sunday morning about 12 o'clock, which certainly must have slowed up the "swingers-out" at Alphonse's place.

A slight interruption intervenes, as between this line and the one above. My friend, Attrice, dropped in to see me. He betook himself to a plantation near Shreveport along about Christmas time, but now says he is anxious to return to Melrose and to Little River, - being Robert (Dee-Dee Boy's) son.

2904

2904

I got a brief opportunity to dabble with two or three philosophers over the week end, and wondered the while just why I had never done more about understanding the life of the individual man before, in times gone by, I sipped their philosophy. It was fun reading about Louis XIV coquetting with Spinoza, Christine of Sweden dragging poor old Des Cartes from his retreat in Leyden to his death in the Swedish capitol, and a few naughty doings of David Hume at Louis XV's court. It is said Hume wrote some letters from Paris or Versailles during his mission to Court, but I don't recall ever having seen them, and I am wondering if you are acquainted with them. Vaguely it seems to me that St. Amand may have quote from one or two of them, but I can't be sure about it, for when I read St. Amand I was a child and Hume was a most shadowy figure from across the channel who didn't mean anything to me. There seem to be so many things we have to investigate eventually on the gallery of Arenbourg, don't you think so.

Yesterday, while going through some old papers, I stumbled across a sketch of my hands made by Mme. du Monde in Paris ever so long ago. I had in mind to send the sketch along, but seem to have misplaced it. The sketch itself was of no especial merit but it did reproduce an interesting ring which I have long since lost but have not forgotten. Someday, I must have one with a yellow tone, set in yellow metal. If I find the sketch, I shall send it along so if you should ever chance to see anything suggesting the general lines in costume jewelry, you may acquaint me with it. Once I like the ring because it reminded me of a place. Sometime I shall cherish one because it will symbolize a person I may have mentioned before how I lost the ring. Returning to Manhattan one night with a friend, we were both struck over the head by a couple of "foot-pads", - don't you love that British word, - as we quitted the Ferry and were just at the top of the elevated steps, about to go down to the subway. I was knocked down the stairs, and when I came to, - somewhat battered and generally a bloody mess, I noticed, - but perhaps half an hour later, my ring was gone. Perhaps I would be demonstrating a superstition equal to that of my local colored friends if I should remark in passing that there seems to have been something about Staten Island that never spelled out "plaisir" for me. Or perhaps I should say it was a lucky place for me in spite of all, since another soul, entirely sympathetic to my own, was strong enough to believe that this first island on the approach to the New World could not barricade the real virtues that stretched beyond on the mainland.

And while on the subject of a greater America, have you seen the April issue of "Holiday" and the elegant pictures I hear are displayed therein of Monticello.....

2905

(N. B.:--This is the final one of the Wild Life Conservation stamps.

If you chance to be facing East as you read these lines, you will note the two feathered friends are headed in the right direction.)

2905

March 29th, 1948.

Memorandum:

A variety of mail today, and most of it for the Madam. A letter from Sister, pulling and hauling at her to come to Shreveport, finally wore down her resistance, and she decided she would go tomorrow. And this in spite of the fact that a letter from the General promised that he and his wife would spend the week-end here.

Ofcourse that meant that the Madam, having gone to Shreveport, would have the Wenks bring her back in two or three days, and the whole posse of Wenks would be added to the General for a go-round that would flatten out the Madam completely, assuming she should survive the Shreveport jaunt.

I tried to look surprised at supper when the Madam, announcing her intentions, heard J. R. advise her against making the journey "until Spring" when he would make the visit with her. That really is a laugh, but it turned the trick, - and that is all that matters.

It was so nice to discover your nice note with the greetings to us both, following all the Henry business. It was a sweet note and the Madam's voice broke once or twice as she read it. We were both glad to have the clipping, too, and she will paste it in the Ghosts Along the Mississippi.

As for little Miss Alberta's letter, it speaks for itself without saying much. I'll bet she's as busy as a hen a-settin', what with workmen running wild in her patio. I shall drop her a line tonight, urging her to drop her patio, - or at least let the Garden Club do the worrying, and forgetting all, catch hold of a couple of paint pots and head up Cane River way.

The truth of the matter is that little Miss A. is out all at sea because of Lyle's death. I think she paid heavily to keep Christian Science readers going a mile a minute during his last illness, not unlike a fervent Catholic might employ a dozen priests to say Mass unceasingly at such a time. And then, when her hopes

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were extinguished by his passing, she somehow lost all sense of security in her Mary Baker Eddy-ism, and so staggers about like an old rooster, partially stunned by a blow, but somehow still able to amble without much realizing in which direction or why. Perhaps another rest period in the country will help her get re-established, - I hope.

The mail also brought me a package from the Doebeles of Fremont, Ohio, - the people who had promised to send me cigars. I have a few friends who smoke them, and I had promised Teddy Baranowski and Big Six and two or three others just plenty of stoggies if and when they came to hand. Picture my surprise and disappointment when on opening the package, shaped like a cigar box, I discovered the contents to be candy, and, if you don't mind, candy that had melted and fused into one great big mess.

But the idea behind the gift was the only important thing, and I shall cut the stuff up into little squares, - it is all kinds and varieties, from chocolate mints to orange jaw-breakers, - and I'll give it to Ezra for his youngsters, and they will be enchanted.

Mr. Bachelier's reference to "my friend", - Paul Veith, has a shade of humor in it, since he realizes I am not to certain if Mr. Veith is pursuing a course I wholly approve, not only by his invitation to the Worsleys to stay with him, - what with five small children in the house, - and also because I am envious of Mr. Veith's ability to buy up Cane River documents to sell to L. S. U. I learned last Thursday night, for example, that Mr. Veith, - he told me himself, had bought some wonderful old plantation account books of some of the early mulatto planters here on the river, and a marvelous set of papers covering the entire law suit brought by Mr. Bertrand, with whom Mr. B., lived for 30 years on Little River, - law suits wherein Mr. Bertrand was trying to collect damages from the Federal Government for cotton of his that was burned on Little River and in Cloutierville when General Banks fired the place in 1864. Mr. Bertrand, being a citizen of France, claimed complete recompense, and there was a great deal of valuable testimony concerning other local planters, their cotton production during the war years, the doings of the Yankees, etc., etc. Isn't it odd that Mr. Bachelier shouldn't have realized how much I should have prized this material. Well, so it goes, and I praise be to God when one person in this world finds another whose head and heart comprehend....

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March 30th, 1948.
Memorandum:

A perfectly lovely day. May it have been equally so in your environs.

In the Kingdom of the Chinese Magnolias, as you know, there is an old custom they follow, - putting out their blossoms before any leaves appear. But at Arenbourg today, as though noting something very special, the lovely white magnolia, tipped with shell pink, held back a single flower to unfold its waxen petals among the pale new leaves. It was as lovely a sight as you could imagine, and I blessed the tree for all it symbolized for me.

And you....

I had expected some roses in today's post, - some plantain lilies and some tritomas (red hot polkers), but somehow they didn't come through although the invoices were to hand last Thursday. But the anticipation of their advent provided me with a good excuse to spend a little extra time at Arenbourg, and it was sweet to breath deep of the new turned earth, mingled with the scent of new mown hay, mixed with vagrant drifts from the direction of the sweet olive and the magnolia.

In the first class section came the enclosures. It sounds like quite a frolic at Briarwood for the week end. I have attended Briarwood picnics, and I really wouldn't have to go to this one, for I'm not too fond of them to start with, parked on the ground among the ticks up that way, and while the list of the people scheduled to attend represents a very diverting group, some of them are extremely tiresome. I guess that's the trouble with picnics, the darned thing is bound to be an all-around business wherein the noisy element invariably dominates the group and it is next to impossible to find much relaxation with those with whom one would really enjoy a measure of solitude and conversation.

I write these lines a little after 9 tonight. I

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It seems odd to see the search lights of a big old tractor moving across the cotton fields beyond the bamboo hedge at the far end of the garden. Melrose never runs its tractors at night, but this is an exception because the tank of ammonia, currently used as fertilizer, somehow got jammed late this evening, after it had just been filled to the brim. If the gas were not drilled into the ground, it would all evaporate during the night, - hence the six hour supply is being worked into the newly ploughed ground between first dark and midnight. What gives the scene a somewhat eerie effect is the vast waves of birds issuing forth from the bamboo everytime the glaring lights of the tractor approach the hedge, - a million black fluttering silhouettes suddenly pasted against the sky, the muffled sound of a myriad wings somehow counterpointing and over-toning the grinding of the tractor as it wheels about at the end of the furrow.

I reckon the birds must be complaining bitterly to have their dreams thus disturbed. As for the tractor driver, he must be thinking his day is fairly long, too. Half an hour ago I ransacked the kitchen, discovering a fine slab of beefsteak which was easily converted into three big old sandwiches. Wrapping them in a well starched white napkin that would fairly glisten in the glare of the tractor's glare, I blanced them on a fence post further down the garden and beyond the bamboo. I pinned down the two corners of the napkin with a couple of bottles of Coca-cola I found in the ice box. My idea was to gamble with the snack, assuming that if the tractor driver sighted the stuff, he undoubtedly needed it, - and if not, I would bring the whole thing home, dividing the beefsteak with Dora, and reserving the balance and the bottles for a "fortifier" on starting for Arenbourg early on the morrow.

But Dora will not fatten on the steak, nor will I float away on the tide of Coca-cola, for as I wrote the above paragraph, I could see the tractor come to a full stop down by the fence post and the machine itself appears to be panting in a greatly subdued fashion.

So runs out the day, and I have promised myself, in spite of some tempting radio programs, to brush up my memory on the philosophies of Kant and Hegel, which will probably end up by putting me to sleep before I know it. But the day, in spite of the philosophers, has been nice, and I do hope it has held a measure of pleasure for somebody else....

01ES

2909 Charles H. 3/29/48
Robina 3/29/48

March 31st, 1948

Memorandum:

Another perfectly lovely day. May it have been twice as nice where you began another twelfth month.

Balancing the bouquet of white German iris on my desk stands a bowl of bright blue periwinkle, the one bouquet nodding gayly to the other as the tremor of the typewriter lends a gesture to the greeting.

And all of them are seemingly saying two words to you.

I spent some busy, happy hours at Arenbourg, stirring the ground about the four mimosa which look to me as though they may well be poised to strike out in some unpredictable direction this year, and with vigor. The little pecan trees got a going over and around, too, and while the larger trees on Melrose haven't put out their leaves completely, our little ones at Arenbourg are completely dressed in their summer finery.

Mrs. Rand came by this evening, bringing three interesting ladies with her, Mrs. Randolph, Mrs. Hemingway and "Atalie" Scott. I guess I have mentioned the first two on previous occasions, and I reckon you may remember "Atalie" Scott as having done some books with Bill Spratling some time back. She is one of the few ladies I know who saw service in the Red Cross in both the 1st and 2nd World Wars. The service in the 1st War took her through Europe, and the 2nd carried her across Africa and on to China and Japan.

She is quite an interesting person, although with six people at a single sitting, one doesn't really get so much of an opportunity for real conversation, especially when the impulse to talk seems to inspire nearly everyone in the group.

Today's mail was not heavy and accordingly my enclosure isn't much. I did not have this prospectus read to me, but gather it is an advertisement for a Reading Machine. Perhaps the text reveals what I

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have never been able to find out: - who in the world would want to buy one of the things.

Of course I have long hoped that sighted as well as blind people might be blessed with them, but what puzzles me as where the records could be rounded up, since every record issued by the Library of Congress declares: "This record is made solely for the use of the blind".

Since Congress supplies the machines to the blind for life, and since Congress apparently controls all the records carrying books, I can't imagine why anyone should want to purchase the item illustrated in this announcement. Perhaps the advertisement itself explains the point.

A letter from the General indicates that several top officers of Standard or Ethyl telephone they are coming for the week end at Baton Rouge, so his journey to Melrose has been put off a week. Pat told me the other day he had never been to the General's home, which is about five miles from town, although Pat said he had been by when there was no one about, and that the swimming pool was quite spiffy.

It was my understanding that the General's only begotten offspring was to marry this March. (Interruption) Duty, however, called the young lieutenant to patrol service along the Iron Curtain, and so marriage plans have had to be delayed until he returns to his Munich base.

My interrupter was Robert Anthony, having walked up from Little River in the dark. He is worried. A mad dog passed his house today and his little boy "got some of that white slobber on his hand and then puts it in his mouth". Start me, I assured the frightened papa that I thought the child wouldn't suffer any, so long as the dog didn't bite him, but old wives tales had shaken Robert pretty thoroughly, one ancient crone having declared that the mere putting on of an old shirt on which a mad dog had slobbered would kill the wearer in two days. And so, with such a hocus-pocus to overcome, I recommended that the little boy be brought up to Melrose tomorrow which, being Knipmeyer Day, will enable me to toss the infant into the good doctor's lap, and his words of wisdom, addressed to the parents, will enable them to dispell their present terror and relax in peace. - But I must be done, and accordingly fold forthwith, with the sincerest hopes that your day has been ever so nice....

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2911 Helen Baldwin

3/21/48

April 1st, 1948.

Memorandum:

I am enchanted to have your elegant letter of Monday.

The best news it contained was the information that you had taken time out to spend an evening at the theatre to enjoy something of your own selection. It seems to me that like everything else, such an entertainment is the more thoroughly enjoyed if shared with a kindred soul, but so often it happens that circumstances prevent us from so doing and then it is that by taking one's self alone, one realizes something of the recompense that comes with communing alone with one's self over a treasure verse or tasting a delight which we ultimately pass along to those nearest to us, not necessarily by ever mentioning the interim itself, but by the increased fullness of soul and spirit, the increased richness of life is passed along, sometimes, I think, even more than we realize.

I think I have heard Chevalier under most of the songs you mentioned. I, too, felt that his selection of "I'm a Bum" was unfortunate, - he did it on the Fred Allen show a week back, and somehow it didn't go over. Pieces like "Mimi" and "Place Pigalle" he does ever so much more successfully, I think I am glad you mentioned his age, which I hadn't thought about until the speculation of 60 came up. Come to think of it, he must be along in that neighborhood, and somehow in realizing that point, I seem to wonder the more at his ability to have held on so long. It just occurs to me for the first time that the element of bashfulness in his personality is not unlike a like quality in Wallace Berry who somehow endeared himself to so many movie fans when displaying that emotion in such pictures as "Min and Bill" and like types. I can picture Chevalier grinning if someone remarked to him that he is the French version of Wallace Berry, can't you.

How nice if you are able to get away to Washington on the morrow. It would certainly be wonderfully thrilling to your little girl friend, and equally so

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to you, but in different ways, - sensing by personal proximity, the majesty and power that oozes from almost every quarter, and themagical breath of colonial and ante bellum Virginia that offers itself in spirit to him who will accept, in visits to such lovely old places as Mount Vernon and Arlington.

You will be tired on your return from such a long trip embracing so many things to claim your enthusiasm, and I urge you not to try to write until you have had a little breathing spell. But do please recall some of the high points and pass them along for my delectation.

It was good of you to tell me what you found in the sub-tropical section of the Botanical Gardens. It is my understanding that you there encountered something not to be met with in the South, - a camelia and a gardenia bush both in flower at the same time. Down this way, the camelias begin blooming in December usually and carry through until the end of March, while the gardenia doesn't start blooming here until the first week in May, continuing usually through the month of June. Up to the moment, - thanks to last summer's heat and this winter's cold, our record at Arenbourg isn't so admirable, but it is good to know that both these extremes were unlike anything in half a century, so I think we may look with assurance to better luck from here on out, and I have a feeling gardenias and such like are going to like Arenbourg.

You will find Helen Baldwin's letter characteristically pleasant. The point she makes of the inability of most people south of the Mason-Dixon line ever having an opportunity to meet some of our local friends over a little glass of wine is undoubtedly true, although I must say I had not counted it before, having failed to realize that it is one of the blessings of this remote situation. I have no doubt she will be successful in collecting many a garment that can be used to unique advantage in this area, and I smile to myself when I think how surprised some of the donors would probably be, if they ever imagined the ultimate destination of their cast off clothing. But all that is important is the fact that those who have in abundance will share with those who have not, and perhaps Helen may be able to help one or two souls in the Waco to see the light by her efforts in this matter.

This afternoon witnessed a typical example of the simple faith, - some would undoubtedly call it crass stupidity, of the untutored negro. At 2 p.m., Robert tapped on my door, his 2 year old son in his arms. You may recall I had told him, if he wanted Dr. Knipmayer to see the child, to be here at 10 this morning. Robert mentioned the fact, but said he figured I could do as well as the regular doctor, - hence the hour.....

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2913 Carolyn Ramsey 7/30/48

April 2nd, 1948.

Memorandum:

If memory serves, this Friday is the day you are to run down to Washington, all things working out nicely to that end.

Naturally I took especial interest at 5 this morning, to tune in on weather reports for your area and was disappointed to hear that the day would be cloudy with scattered showers. Assuming you got off regardless, I hope the weather man scattered his showers outside your line of progress, and perhaps the fair skies promised for Saturday made their bow ahead of schedule.

On this front, the weather has been marvelous, -

all blue and gold, with a delightful breeze that made spading a pleasure and I cut myself a large slice.

All the crepe myrtles haven't been worked as yet, but the ground around the two elephant traps has had a good going over and half a double row of the same bushes at the West end of Unit No. 1 have had attention. Within the next couple of days, I shall have finished working on those on each side of the drive, separating Units No. 2, and No. 3, so that the April rains, if any, may get straight down to the roots without delay. Already most of the crepe myrtles are in leaf, and I am counting on them to grow magnificently this season. The pears are flourishing but the gardenias, - all of them, give the impression that they are but completely dead. I am not pulling them up, however, - just in hopes. I shall regret the passing of over a hundred of these bushes, of course, but more than their loss and the labor involved, is the time element, for if the extraordinary winter hadn't killed them, they would have been fairly good size this year. I had planted them along the pear-persimmon drive with a view to having them reach a better height by growing with the fruit trees than they will if I have to re-plant them after the pears have taken a head start. But perhaps the shade from the pears in a year or so will enhance the roundness of the gardenia bushes even though it may retard their height.

The enclosed note from Carolyn Ramsey seems to confirm

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Helen Baldwin's promise to get back to Cane River before too long.

On reading Carolyn's note, an idea for another photographic book struck me, - the St. Francisville Church yard, reputed the loveliest in America.

I'm not sure if you have seen photographs of its little Norman-Gothic church, its lovely live oaks and some of its quaint tombs. There is something about the quality of the moss that drips from every live oak about the church that somehow seems to suggest a composite composition by Gustave Dore and Audrey Beardsley.

What wit Carolyn living in Marshall, which isn't so far from Shreveport, she ought to be able to skip down to St. Francisville, - a couple of hundred miles, three or four times within the year, thus getting shots of the place in its various seasonal costumes.

Of course all the Feliciana gentry are buried in this churchyard, and it is said that more northerners request burial space for themselves in this yard than anywhere else in the country.

I have always wanted to see a book made up exclusively of inscriptions on tombstones, but with the present entity, one could sprinkle lovely shots of the church, its live oaks, its famous camellias, etc., etc., among photographic reproductions of the headstones and tombs themselves. I may have mentioned my favorite epitaph there records the passing of one of the numberless barrows who expired on a plantation down Baton Rouge way. The simple slab speaks of the young lady as having "died in Ambrosia" in "Feliciana", - which somehow sound like the ultimate in something or other.

I am under the impression a really lovely photographic book could be contrived from such sweet recordings and snippets from the marvelous assortment of strange and appealing rural settings, the volume forming at once a most brilliant and beautiful memorial for the families whose kin folk sleep there in this lovely old place, while as a souvenir of the "Old South" it might have an appeal for the thousands of visitors who visit it annually.

Eventually, don't you think I ought to point out the project to little Miss Ramsey.

Well, I declare, I'm astonished to find myself so quickly at the close of this page. I am so hoping you are having a lovely, lovely week end.

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April 4th, 1948.

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Memorandum: This morning's weather man out of Manhattan says it is fair and warmer in the middle Atlantic States today. Naturally my thoughts are on Washington, and I'm glad things are as they are.

The weather in these parts continues glorious, giving me full opportunity to make dirt fly at Arenbourg and to keep me busy at Melrose entertaining passing pilgrims who were plentiful this Saturday and Sunday.

I know nothing of the contents of the enclosed booklet, but thought you might find something in it. Dr. Hamilton of Chapel Hill, North Carolina gave it to me. The Madam didn't feel up to receiving him, - I think she got off on the wrong foot with him a decade ago, but I had a very pleasant couple of hours with him.

You would have enjoyed him, too, - a little man with white hair and bright eyes whose has devoted years of his life to assembling and preserving historical documents, especially those dealing with the South.

He volunteered information and personal opinions covering Lois Lester and Essae Mae, probably not stopping to wonder if I knew them. He said he doubted if Miss Culver had any idea of what an Historical Department for the State Library meant, - or its value, - and he said he view many treasures scattered about in the State Library, the State Librarian telling him she didn't know what to do with the things, how they should be housed, how they should be classified, etc. He said she was very cooperative, giving him vast letter files of rare material, which have been boxed up and shipped to North Carolina, there to be sorted, copied, micro-filmed, etc., the originals eventually being returned to Louisiana. It goes without saying, of course, that whatever is found will undoubtedly be released as news items, benefiting North Carolina and not Louisiana, who will probably not receive the originals until after the press releases have been thoroughly aired. Isn't it a pity Essae Mae has never seemed able to comprehend the elaborate prospect which I have drawn up to further the success of her Department and the glorification of herself as its head.

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She is so vitally needed in her job to keep the Legislature in line. What a pity she can't comprehend that with accepting the recommendations of those in a position to effect a marvelous repository, she loses everything except the shell of the organization.

Well, enough tears on that score....

I inquired about the original manuscript of Mary Boykin Chesnut. Dr. Hamilton seemed astonished that I should have heard of it, and altogether delighted to talk about it. He says North Carolina has the entire manuscript, - except the lost pages that probably Mrs. Chesnut forgot when moving about from pillar to post during the last years of the Civil War. He says a niece asked for the manuscript some time ago, and I back in order to edit it, only about a third of the original having been used in the edition, "Diary of Dixie". The niece has not responded to recent letters from the University, and he doesn't know if she will finish the editing or not. He didn't seem worried about the fate of the manuscript. Perhaps he has a microfilm of it. He seemed a little surprised at first, - and later returned with an apparent feeling of conviction that the idea was good, - following my suggestion that the University publish the Diary in toto, leaving the reader to fill in the gaps, if the proper editing and connecting passages cannot be made during our life time. He says the original manuscript is written on all kinds of paper, what with the shortage of that material as the strain of war in the 1862, 1864 and 1865 years cut off Southern Carolina from all sources of supply. Naturally I was enchanted to learn these details, and shall write Dr. Hamilton within a week or two, after his return to Chapel Hill, urging him again to recommend publication of the Diary by the University.

He made a few notations in a little black notebook as he talked with me. At the gate, I asked him if he is being true to the writers of ante bellum diaries by keeping one himself. He laughed and said he was about to confess he wanted the exact spelling of my name, since he wanted to put me in his Journal.

Your two page letter, probably dated Tuesday, but reached me on Saturday, but I am holding it until the morrow for reading. What with the wonderful weather, the plantation was going full tilt yesterday, and today a funeral at St. Mary's-on-the-Bayou claimed everybody from Lane River, so that my Ethiopian you and I will probably not turn up until Monday noon. And so I fold, - anticipating the morrow with impatience, and hoping the while that your today has been grand....

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no rush - no importance

2917

April 4th, 1948.

Later: - and probably worthy of disposal

Memorandum:

The funeral must have been a great success, for it lasted five hours, according to my faithful Ethiopian, who kept to his appointed rounds in spite of obvious fatigue.

A hard boiled egg, a steak sandwich and a glass of milk revived him, however, and thus I was able to give up my game of Patience, and so enjoy your nice letter of Wednesday tonight instead of tomorrow.

I am so glad to learn that plans were advancing for the Washington trip, and I concur whole-heartedly with you regarding the disturbing element of uncertainty which some people seem to enjoy injecting into other people's plans whenever possible.

I think I must have been rather clumsy in the Zeeweeg matter. I honestly didn't expect you to do anything about it, - unless circumstances in your neighborhood should make such a meeting pleasureable and convenient.

I merely passed the business along to you as I might pass along an extra dish at table, something that looked pleasant but which was being passed along with no idea as to whether volition, - or space, - was available at the moment. Surely you might feel perfectly free to reject it altogether or to sample it on another go-round, - say a year hence. I do hope you will understand that I had no idea of expecting any more on your part, but rather mentioned it just in case some unexpected opportunity should develop.

When the coast is clear sometime in the future, and you chance to have extra time on your hands, don't you think something like this might be dashed off:

"Dear Frau Zeeweeg,

Sometime ago I visited the recording studios of the A. F. for the B. to look the place over and send along a description of it to a friend, interested in the Foundation, and telling him how interested I was in the recording and the sound of the voice.

My friend (or F. M.) of Meorose has subsequently spoken to me of your interest in Braille, and I am wondering if you are also interested in the Talking Books, and

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"Both my friend and I have long been admirers of your husband's writings, and only recently have I had the privilege of turning through your own splendid volume. I feel certain many readers of your husband's World of Yesterday would be ever so grateful if they might have the privilege of reading your book too. It is my understanding that effort is being made from Melrose to exert pressure on the Library of Congress to include your volume in its current schedule of Talking Books.

"I should ever so much enjoy re-visiting the Recording Studios in 15th Street, Manhattan, and it occurs to me that possibly you might care to make a little pilgrimage there, too, in view of the possible incorporation of some of your own work in records. The idea occurs to me, too, that it would be ever so pleasant to share the visit with someone who is actively interested in the work for the blind, and so I turn to you, hoping that should you find me in New York at lunch time on a day when I am not too busy at my office, we might break bread together, and possibly arrange to pay a visit to the Foundation jointly.

"Surely this somewhat abrupt approach must appear officious on my part. In truth, however, I must say quite frankly that I have so often exchanged thoughts with a mutual friend regarding the wonderful contributions you and yours have made to contemporary literature that in writing you, it doesn't seem to me to be addressing a stranger but rather an acquaintance whom I have not met as yet had the opportunity of mere personal contact. Cordially and sincerely yours."

How do you find the matter handled in that vein? But no matter how you find it, please don't think I am expecting you to establish contact at all, - for no one but you can possibly realize all the million little circumstances at present which would make delaying the matter far wiser until such a time as the pathway is more free and the pressure of business and domestic affairs has eased, as perhaps during another year they may do at one interval or another.

And now I am done with that subject, and I feel certain you understand.

I'm glad you liked the magnolia leaves from Arenbourg. The weaving was a design and a fabric woven by the Madam. J. H. purchased the Winsey volume on Friday and told me today it is a reference work and duller than ditchwater. I didn't tell him - knew anything about the existence of such a book. Poor you, - but perhaps the over-valuation by Winsey Howe can be forgotten, and I'm hoping the New Orleans item will go better. I'm so glad you had the

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April 5th, 1948.

Memorandum: And so you are back from Washington and a little tired from the travel, but feeling that good tiredness that comes with having been kind to your little girl friend, - "friend-girl" - as Aurellia would say, - and possibly no more fatigued than had you spent the same time whizzing up and down the road to Greenwood.

I have thought of you so constantly during the past week, what with your natal day and the trip to Washington falling both within the same seven days, and it is curious how rested I find myself tonight, just thinking that possibly you may be completely relaxed in your accustomed surroundings, - a restful experience in itself.

I enclose an article coming to hand in yesterday's post, - or Saturday's rather. I understand it is by our old friend, one Postello of Tulane. It seems to me I recognize a building in the upper right hand corner. I think I never drew one of my inimitable plans of this house, but from the photograph you can get an idea of the appearance of the place, and facing South. Beginning on the right side and moving to the left, the first door is to my bathroom; the second to my bedroom and work room, my desk being on the north side of the room where I can glance across the White Garden and on to Arenbourg. The third door is to the living room and the fourth to a guest bedroom. From what I see of the picture, it doesn't look like much, and it must have been taken some time ago, since my fine row of bananas don't seem to be blotting out the view of the gallery and I don't see the pew of the St. Augustin's church which graces the gallery, - usually occupied jointly by Grandpa and a stack of Talking Books.

The weather in these parts continues magnificent. I was up and abroad early this morning, a heavy fog holding back the dawn until I was at Arenbourg. On Sunday evening I had loosened some earth in the butterfly lily bed at the East end of this house, and with a big old box of them under my arm, I marched up the road to get them well planted before sun up. I now put most of them around the raggedy house where I suppose they will grow with abandon, the soil is so rich there. Eventually we shall have our six sided

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pigeonnere on that spot, and it is nice to think that by then today's planting will have increased tremendously so that the new tower at the axis of the two drives will look as though a gush of green and white jets are bursting up from the soil.

I worked mightily stirring up the ground around more crepe myrtles and around the nandina hedges, - in hopes a rain may eventually pass this way and give everything a big spurt upward.

Back home to bath and to attend to half a dozen odds and ends, - including my patient, and thence, after lunch, back to Arenbourg, and so back for another bath and another go-round, - and thus spins out my day.

We took a little ride after supper tonight, - J. H., the Madam and I. We passed Ty-po plantation where the new gin is fast taking shape. J. H. said he had talked with Sam Tobin this afternoon. The latter said that after all, his is a good wife, and even though they are divorced, he thinks he is right in fixing up the plantation house, - a very ordinary dwelling, to the tune of about \$7,500.00, which, in fact, he is now doing. J. H. observed that it would probably be a week or so before we hear they have re-married. Sam Tobin says he doesn't know where he is going to get the money to pay for the alterations currently in progress, but supposes he will have to borrow. J. H. told him not to worry about such debts but let the contractor do the worrying. I guess J. H.'s idea is that the place is beyond saving anyway and worrying at it this late date would be utterly useless on Sam's part.

I am currently reading Crecy's "15 Decisive Battles of the World" with additional battles added by one Murray. It's good stuff and I'm refreshing much of my ancient history and learning a heap of things I didn't know before. None of the words are spelled out, so some of the characters are a bit hazy as mental pictures. I was deeply touched by the story of the German hero, - possibly spelled "erminius", whose pregnant wife was abducted to Italy where their son was born, and the child, when 4 years old, led in a Roman Triumph. I hope the child didn't know what it was all about, and certainly the Romans who thought that one up should have been tapped on the head with a mallet without anyone bothering to see what was wrong with the inside workings. So many things we have to eventually discuss and listen to, including the

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Memorandum: On April 6th, 1948, I was at the home of the General and the General's wife, and we discussed the matter of the General's return to the United States. The General is now in the United States and is working on the matter of the General's return to the United States. The General is now in the United States and is working on the matter of the General's return to the United States.

The marvelous weather continues, - wonderful for the cotton planters because it is warm and dry. But you and I could stand some moisture at Arenbourg.

Being Army Day, perhaps that had something to do with the fact that I ripped off a letter to our national representatives in Congress, voicing the consensus of opinion at this bend of the river in opposition to Universal Military Training, etc. I reckon it will cut precisely no ice, - but at least the opinions of a few of their constituents is known to the Senators and Representatives.

Just as I was leaving Arenbourg around 9:00, this morning, - all a-drip with the sweat of vigorous, if not productive toil, I bumped into State Senator Fredericks, who had the unique distinction for a number of years of holding two State jobs at the same time, - Senator and President of the Northwest Louisiana State College. He lost in the last election, but Charles Log stated over the air that Senator Fredericks could have any State job he wanted, - apparently not requiring a vote of confidence from the electorate, and so I suppose he will be Chairman of the Highway Commission, or some such political job. Being Army Day, that subject got a good going over, much to the satisfaction of neither the Senator nor I, since he was too pleased with himself and the world to care, and I was too hot and bothered about the weed situation which I had just attended to in part.

On Friday, the General will be here, and I shall inquire his opinion on the impending bill or bills. Dan says of course Stephen will be on the side of the Big Brass, - and I shall be pleased to listen and learn.

Mrs. Rand telephoned this morning, - on her own account and in behalf of Dr. Rand. They are going to run down to Lafayette or New Iberia or wherever to attend the annual meeting of the Iris Association and wanted me to go with them. It was kind of them to ask me, but naturally I'm much more interested in trying to make things grow at Arenbourg than I am in attending dinners and jumping over iris bogs down in the bayou country at this season of the year.

1888

2922

I suppose you have noticed many a time that once in a while, everything, and apparently for no obvious reason, gets a slightly out of joint, resulting in the exhaustion that comes with countless little annoyances. It seemed to be one of those days in these parts, only somehow I wasn't exhausted when day was done, but could look back at little no-account things which are difficult to explain.

For instance, I was busy at gardening, wringing wet with sweat, when Celeste suddenly appeared from no where, and taking me by the arm, ask me if I would please just meet half a dozen ladies from South Louisiana who were spending the day with her. I would, of course, but merely to say "Delighted", and fly on, without stopping for a minute at the longest.

And then Aurelia decided there were too many covers on the Madam's bed, what with the thermometer in the upper 80's. Accordingly, just before departing for the day, she took off all the bed furnishings, including pillows, bolster, etc., and then apparently forgot all about her original intention, and vanished.

Four men worked in the vegetable garden all day, and their primary reason for being there was to prepare the ground and plant five or six hundred cabbage, pepper, and tomato plants, the latter all having been brought from town, and being out of the soil, were bound to be planted within the time before sun down. I chanced to pass through the dairy this evening about 8 or 8:30, and there were all the plants.

The darkies explain such days by saying "Sometimes the Devil, he pass 'round". I don't know and don't care.

I dropped by Alfred Llorenz's house for a moment this afternoon and saw the effects of the Winter on some of his plants. Twenty five years ago, his wife had planted a couple of gardenias on each side of the gate. They were fine bushes and had never been effected by the occasional Louisiana cold snaps. But this year's blast cooked one completely and the other looks like a de-plumed bird of paradise. If these long established items caved in before the big devastation, there is little wonder that ours at Arenbourg folded up by the dozen. I continue to leave them standing, however, in spite of their funereal appearance, hoping against hope that some of them will start in again at the roots. But we must plant some new ones this autumn, don't you think so....

1888

Dora 4/4

2923

April 7th, 1948.

Memorandum:

How nice of the postman today to bring me a postcard showing the music room at Mount Vernon.

Confirming, as it did, your successes in getting into the big road. I was altogether enchanted. And when I learned from your message that the Chinese magnolias had unfolded for your delight & by re-placing the faded Japanese cherry blossoms, I felt certain your heart must have been almost as enchanted with the former as it would have been with the latter.

And undoubtedly you glanced at each ivory like flower to see if you could find one that was from white to just off shell pink, and so view a replica of Arenbourg.

The weather continues hot and dry, but a good breeze helped out a lot in the spading department.

I concentrated today on the nandinas which look a little scrawny, but expects for one or two replacements that will be necessary in the autumn, our two short hedges to the East and to the South of the one time residence will be pretty much intact, and the circular drive, separating units No. 2 and 3, has all the promise of supporting a fairly good hedge, assuming we get an even break in the weather this year. I think I have mentioned before that behind this hedge are planted plenty of crepe myrtles which all summer should wave their red and white plumes above the green of the nandina, while in the winter, when the crepe myrtles have discarded their leaves, the red berries of the nandina hedge will attract the eye to the green hedge itself, and the crepe myrtles will recede to insignificance. With one or two exceptions, all the crepe myrtles seem to be doing nicely, and the one or two replacements can easily be set in during November of this year, so that all will probably grow to about the same height and will make quite a lovely backdrop for the circular drive. I think.

The privet hedge along the line between Arenbourg and Alphonse, is growing with the greatest abandon. Already it is as high as my head and thick-thick. Before June has arrive, it will represent quite a job to cut.

cses

2924

for trimming, but I can manage it alright, and I am pleased that this green wall has so quickly sprung up to demark the separation from the cotton fields to the South of us.

From Dora's letter, one gathers that Life magazine must be getting quite a record in handling its subscriptions. The difficulties I had that Dora refers to is the five year subscription I had when the magazine started. At the end of the first year, I failed to receive any copies, and eventually Life simply wore me down by interminable letters that had no bearing on what seemed to be the simplest of cases, and in the end, - I guess that was about 1937, what with one thing or another, I merely gave up the battle, - which, from what Dora says, probably shows that I was right in doing. Isn't it curious such an organization should have such a gummy way of handling things. I'll bet their advertising department doesn't operate along similar lines.

Dr. Rand came by to see me after dark tonight. I assume he must have been working at his camp all afternoon. He spoke of his "atchez trip and told me Pierce Butler, Junior, told him his father is writing an article or a book which will come off "the Louisiana Press" next month. I can't imagine what the "Louisiana Press" may turn out to be, for I never heard of the thing, and I'm wondering if it could be the Louisiana State University Press, or the Journal of History of Louisiana. With Dr. Butler being interested not at all in things historical, I cannot imagine him doing an article, - let alone a book, - on the history of Laurel Hill. I am hoping the story is true, Heaven knows, but I shall remain incredulous until something in print comes to hand.

The doctor said his purpose in passing this ay to see me was two fold, - to invite me again to make the jaunt into the native iris regions South of here this week end, and secondly, to get some information about the ways and means of procuring a Reading "achie for the daughter of one of his associate physicians, - the young lady having gone blind at the birth of her first child. What strange things do happen to people, and what a pity the mother of a new born babe should lose the sight, so precious to herself and for the care of her child. Lord, -ord.....

cses

2925

R.D 4/6/48

Memorandum:

The weather continues hot and dry. I hope I am not going to have to sing that refrain for the balance of the summer.

Today's incoming mail was odd indeed. One piece only, - the enclosed, - not catalogues, no newspapers, no nothing.

Peter and Little King passed this way tonight, asking if I would like to accompany them to a party at St. Augustine's school on Little River. It was nice of them to ask me, but I declined. The school had sent me an invitation earlier today and one came also from St. Mathew's, - up the road, which I also declined, although I must say I was appreciative that they remembered me.

I arranged things at Arenbourg today so that I could begin stirring up the soil around the mandinas before big day, an inclination that stems from two reasons:

1st, - I think it is bound to rain shortly, and I want to have things made easy for all our floral friends to get a long drink easily, and

2nd, it's so hot these cloudless days at noon time that I accomplish twice as much work early in the morning, and at a minimum of exertion, I guess.

In any event, the gay young blades who can run tractors all day and frolic all night have my blessings, if that is what they like and can manage, but slothful me, I prefer to fold up my beard earlier and thus get two jumps ahead of the dawn.

Today, being Thursday, the Knipmayers came by for an hour. They didn't have a ything interesting to report, save that their clinic at St. Mathews was wedged out with people, what with no lady doctor in the region. They did say that some physician in Alexandria and his wife wanted to come to see me, - a Dr. and Mrs. Kranke. What they probably want is to get a peak at

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ye quaint olde plantation, and are undertaking the
hurdle at the front gate by this round about method.
I must ask Dr. Rand who the Krankes may be and from whence
they hailed. Could there be something Swabish in that
name.

Somehow during the past 24 hours, I did get around
to read a couple of Greasy's Battles, - The Destruction
of the Spanish Armada, - which I believe we both heard
over the "C B S Was There" program, and the Battle of
Blenheim, where Mr. Churchill's somewhat baggish ancestor
distinguished himself.

In the acco nt of the Armada, I was astonished at
the outrageous doings of Queen Elizabeth who seems to
have been so intent on saving pennies that her sailors,
during the battle, almost starved to death because she could
not spend sufficient funds for adequate food for them,
and the only way they could get enough powder and shot
to blast away at the Spaniards was to capture the enemy's
own supply ships to obtain the rounds of ammunition
required. Of course the big wind that finished off
the Armada was just good luck for Elizabeth, but what
a bag to take such chances with the lives of the people
who were fighting to save her from destruction.

Among the German iris at Arenbourg were a variety
of colors, white, yellow, deep blue, etc., but the
latter, which was exceptionally large in blossom, has
suddenly turned white. The deep blue really should have
been placed down by Uncle A's, so the prevailing wind
would have brought it no pollen from the other iris on
the place, since white iris somewhat has a way of dominating
all varieties, once the pollen from the different shades
or colors mix. But I like the pure white better than the
deep blue anyway, and so I can't get mad at my own
carelessness.

This morning I picked myself a dew laden bouquet
of Milk and Wine lilies at Arenbourg, and they are
nodding with due majesty here on my desk before me.
Their perfume is rather heavy, if you recall, although not
at all sweet, but rather on the pungent side. Don't
you think it's nice to keep these little trophies of our
slowly unfolding domaine constantly before us in the form of
bouquets. Somehow it seems to extend the bridge toward
realization a step further with each new evidence
of future parterres.

I'm keeping my fingers crossed that this week end we
find you able to do lots of nothing, and so get caught up
a little on your very busy one of last week, - and
undoubtedly the enusing days on your return.....

8325

April 9th, 1948.

Memorandum:

How nice of you to take time out in your busy-busyness to
Monday, following your trip, to write me such a delightful
note.

I am of course enchanted that you have lots of things to
tell me about your sojourn on the Potomac, but please, please
don't try to write until you have had an opportunity to let
get caught up a bit on odds and ends and a breathing spell.

In yesterday's note, I think I mentioned that our
incoming mail for Thursday was inordinately thin. Today
I learned one reason, - the mail pouch had somehow
fallen under the moving train which ground the bag of OI
and its contents to pieces. Such accidents are so
rare that one never thinks of them in accounting for the
a slip-up in correspondence, but this case is worth
remembering, I guess, for sometime or other I may have
failed to respond to some point in your letters, and if so,
please always be so good as to refer to the matter again.
Naturally I am enchanted that your note arrived today, -
post assures me that so far as our correspondence goes,
nothing was lost in this particular accident. One of the
cannot help wondering, however, if one letter or another, -
say from Mrs. Brandon, - or some such, might never have
come to hand, and that would really give a false impression,
were no response forth-coming.

Aside from your nice note in this morning's post,
there was one from little Miss Dorman, - Be-ating me for
not using my typewriter. That is a tune so much along
her particular line of melody that I shall not take the
trouble to respond.

Another letter was from Betty Smedley, of Austin,
Texas, threatening to arrive in "atchitoches tonight, -
following a tour of East Texas, bent on viewing dogwood
with three friends, whom she threatens to bring down
here on the morrow. The General and lady and Pat are
expected later tonight, between 10 and 12, so with
seven extra at the board tomorrow, there ought to be
bub enough. Now if only the Shreveport contingent would

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blow in, we could round the week end up with a bang.

Mr. Bachelier is scheduled to arrive on Monday for a couple of days visit, so if something gets out of whack momentarily with my memoranda, don't lay it all on the fractious Texas and Pacific Railroad, for I shall probably be the one at fault.

Yhr er yher continues dry-dry, and Caroline complains of dust storms around Briarwood. I was surprised to hear on the radio last night that there are forest fires burning in 8 Louisiana Parishes at the present time. There was no mention of Natchitoches, but Winn Parish has a couple, Winn being the parish adjoining us to the East, whence comes Barle Long and other hill-billies, and if they get their beards singed in the local fireworks I shall not be able to cry about that.

I felt rewarded for having been noble by staying at home last night, for I accordingly got under full steam good and early this morning, and so was able to get all the nandinas attended to before quitting them at 10 to get on with my daily schedule. I returned to Arenbourg at 12 and finished up the few crepe myrtles I had skipped the other day, so that these items, at least, can get a maximum of water, when and if the celestial faucets eventually get turned on.

I don't know what is the matter with the lovely new Chinese magnolia. It was about 6 feet high when I set the thing out, but now it seems to have jumped at least two or three feet, - for I cannot reach the top and there's no telling where it has headed for. What with the unfavorable dryness, I'm surprised it ever got hold at all, and now that it seems determined on doing a Jack-in-the-beanstalk, I'm beginning to wonder if it won't wear itself out with sheer growth.

Of course the cotton farmers are enchanted with this prolonged dry spell, for it has given them an opportunity to get all the ploughing done and the land prepared for cotton planting which will begin on Melrose on Monday. I hear much talk locally, - that is, on local radio stations, about the 1,000 cotton pickers being turned out this year in Memphis, and what it is going to do in dislocating tillers of the soil. I hope it doesn't whisk away all my friends from this area, but I guess that wouldn't happen within a twinkling. As yet, the mechanical picker gathers in so much trash with the lint that the rate for cotton thus harvested is much below that of the hand-picked variety. But I talk too much, and you have too many things of more importance, and so - fold....

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2929

April 11th, 1948

Memorandum: The weather continues hot and dry, with high winds to intensify the drought and a stirring of air to make things seem cool.

I hope your week end was ever so much less active than ours.

The S. G. Henrys and Pat were nice. The people from Texas were equally so. To my mild surprise, those scales people from Shreveport who tried to crash Melrose for a week end, - albeit uninvited, - last autumn, breezed in on Saturday noon while we were at dinner. Tom Payne chased them out.

The incoming mail was late, not arriving until noon. Aside from the usual newspapers there was a single post card, - from Sister, saying she and her family would be down for the week end.

By 2 o'clock, the Madam decided she would rather have the Wenks some other time. I tried telephoning them but the Shreveport circuits were busy. I tried sending a telegram, but the Natchitoches office was closed. Then I tried, - and succeeded in sending a restrainin telegram by telephoning long distance to Alexandria from when the message was sent to Shreveport. I never knew before that one could thus telephone a telegram to a city with separate, or different exchange, and have the message sent from there.

After sending the telegram to the effect that the house was full and a later visit would be more suitable, it suddenly occurred to me that, probably, when delivered in Shreveport, signed in the Madam's name, the point of origin would read not Natchitoches, but Alexandria, whereupon the Wenks would be in a real panic, being unable to figure out the busy schedule at Melrose while from the date line, it would appear the Madam was in Alexandria.

But the Wenks left Shreveport before the message was delivered, and on arriving here, did not receive too joyous a welcome, and so, although we were about to sit down for supper, they refused to stay, and were out and gone again five minutes after their arrival, - which suited everybody except themselves.

eses

2930

The General and Pat returned to Baton Rouge Sunday afternoon and later Mrs. General departed for the Shreveport area where her sister lives, the latter driving down here to pick her up.

Somehow, - and I can't think how or when, I was able to receive visits from friends on Little River, - Dees-Dee Boy, his son, Robert, another son, Clyde, and Amos Payton and Clyde Laude Emmett Davis and a few others. They didn't have much news at all - though they did tell me that a white child from Natchitoches fell out of a motor boat at Bermuda and drowned in Cane River yesterday noon. The accident occurred slap in front of "Uncle Phano's" house, and had little Westan only been there, he would no doubt have made a moving entry in his diary. I don't understand why so many people die each year in Cane River, although it would seem as though most of them are motor boat accidents. I never did favor too many motor boats on Cane River, and I'm glad to say there aren't many.

Folding up my beard around 7:30 on Saturday night, I was slept out by three this morning, and so jogged along with my reading of "Crey's Battles." In this addition, Prof. Murray has added a few battles to those of Crey, who ended his collection with Waterloo. Murray does a very excellent description of the Battle of Mexico City, when that rascal, Cortez, had cracked the Aztec empire. Old Crey in his 1852 work included Saratoga as one of the 14 decisive battles of the world. He mentioned the German baron but didn't refer to his extraordinary wife.

Naturally I thought of your guest when the radio announced the explosion of a revolution in Bogota in the midst of the Pan American conference. The proximity of Columbia to Venezuela probably doesn't effect business in the latter country, although the news commentators beat the drum as though much of South America is quite unsettled at the moment. Perhaps the unsettled state of things will force him to break of his New York visit sooner than originally planned, and, I imagine, that will be alright, too.

The General asked if he might walk up to Arenbourg with me to see how things are growing, but something intervened, and so I shall have the companionship of another, - Mr. Bachelier, - on the morrow. So things turn...

sees

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more mobile to still a swim April 12th, 1948. ...
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Memorandum:

Today, three years ago, F. D. R. died. How many people scattered all over the world today must be recalling how stunned they were three years ago this 12th of April.

I am glad to hear on the radio that Miss Eleanor is unveiling a statue to F. D. R. in London today. If the American women are a little more appreciative of her manifold virtues, they will be erecting one in her memory within three years of her death, although you may be sure it will be the underprivileged ones and not the one of the D. A. R. type who apparently don't recognize one of the world's great women when they see her.

I recalled early this morning that I had my dates confused about Mr. Bachelier's visit. He isn't supposed to arrive until next Monday, the 19th. But we had no other visitors to keep us from getting out of the swing of passing pilgrims. Mrs. Rand came in this afternoon, bringing a few ladies with her, - Mrs. Wetmore, Mrs. Randolph Kirk, Mrs. Lillian Trichell, President of the Louisiana Iris Society.

We had a pleasant sitting, but we declined going down to the Rand camp with them. Mrs. Trichell returned here for supper, and is staying for a day or so before returning to her home in Shreveport.

She had many messages for me from Miss Myra Smith, of whom she saw at the Iris Society's annual meeting in Lafayette. Mrs. Wetmore, whom I had met before but seem to have forgotten, confessed that she had come to see Melrose solely out of curiosity to meet me. It seems that Dr. Hamilton of Chapel Hill had met her, - I guess in Natchez, although she lives in Alexandria, shortly after he left Melrose last week or when ever, and had told her at long last he had met somebody in Louisiana who was something or other and so forth and so on, and he apparently sang my praises in such a high key that the lady's curiosity was vastly aroused, impelling her to make today's trip in spite of an engagement for cards this evening. Naturally she was a disappointed lady when she headed back toward home, poor thing. After all, "only two people can talk," and she was with four or five. ...

1885

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Besides, I always keep in mind a line of wisdom from the Madam's lips: "Anybody who does all the talking always has a good time". And as I already knew what I knew, and was anxious to learn a heap I didn't know from Dr. Hamilton, I gave him some opportunity to acquaint me with points about which I was in ignorance, and obviously by his testimony to la Wetamore proved the truth of the Madam's old adage.

The scorching, high winds continue while the weather man declares he scours the heavens in vain for any high of rain for days ahead. What survived the freeze at Arenbourg is still alive, but I must say something are beginning to look droopy. Let's hope the weather may can be wrong.

What with the D. D. T. program getting under way, with the sprayers headed in this general direction, it would seem as though they may anticipate the advent of the insects which don't seem to have quite made up their minds, as yet. But possibly they are about to put in an appearance, since the twitter of swallows were contending with the raucous note of the millions of starlings or black birds tonight, and I reckon a chimney sweep is upon his insect supplies and knows more about the proper moment to appear than any old timer of the D. D. T. program. I haven't heard any orioles as yet, although they must be practically here, since they usually make their bow about the same time the swallows do. My old mocking bird who is forever nesting in a big crepe myrtle by my gate is busy-busy at his loom, for no sooner does he put out a fresh supply of short strips each morning than he swoops down and carries them off, one by one, and rewards me after each successive trip by singing merrily for five minutes at a stretch. Forhouse building, they seem as happy with string as a Babylonian was with brick, and at this season it is fun to hang a few strands on the fence every morning just to see how fast the mocking birds and the cardinals will make off with them. Their nests will be completed and probably nicely filled out with eggs before the oriole sails in on a liquid note and decides to get down to real business, for obviously, of all the feathered weavers, he is the greatest master in the world.

I am ashamed to admit how little I am reading these days, and how little I am listening to the radio. I didn't get home tonight until after Lux Radio was half finished, and I shall probably be asleep before Lady Esther gets under full sail. But if there are souls to be found in grass and in flowers, perhaps I shall find as good employment on the terrace at Arenbourg tomorrow at dawning, when tonight's slothfulness will enable me to enjoy a dividend in the blossom of a lily or a rose....

2933

April 13th, 1948.

Memorandum:

May I tell you that the elephant traps are brimming full and that all our little floral friends at Arenbourg are drinking deep and to their hearts' content.

I awoke at 3:25 this morning, enchanted at what I took to be the patter of rain. The patter increased to a measured downpour, and the good work kept up until 8 o'clock. It rained again at mid day and tonight it is coming down gently again.

The thermometer is a little below its 80 and 90 degree readings of the past few days, but sufficiently high to cooperate with the moisture to induce all green things to grow madly.

The tiny mimosas are now in full leaf and at the tip of each angular branch there appears to be every manifestation of intentions to grow madly. Suppose we get half a break in this summer's rainfall, and the four sentries holding down Unit No. 1 will give the impression that they are old established firms.

I probably mentioned some time back that it seemed we should have a chinkopin tree, what with Natchitoches meaning "the chinkopin eaters", and so I planted one some time back in November, I guess. Well, the Arenbourg one is growing madly, even though the one planted at "elrose is dead-dead. I don't know how to spell chinkopin, which, I suppose, must be an Indian name for the tree which greatly resembles the horse chestnut we know in Europe, and while it is said to be at its best if grown in the hills of Louisiana, we shall see what we can do with this one in the river bottoms.

The roses are blooming in the greatest profusion,

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and while there isn't sufficient acid in the local soil to make them appear at their best, still they seem to be doing alright at Arenbourg thus far.

I must refer to the milk and wine lilies again. Last night's rain somehow touched them off, somewhat as a match might do something for a skyrocket. This afternoon many of the more modest bulbs and shot their buds up a couple of feet into the air and by now, I suppose, a spread of milk white with wine red streaks are blooming mightily all over the place.

From all this talk about flowers, you may readily imagine that most of my thoughts today have been concentrated on Nature's doings as between the margin of Cane River and the road leading to La Cote Joyeuse.

We didn't get any mail today, except from the General, - a bread and butter note, that was all. I shall be interested to see if we hear from the Winks very soon, possibly yes, possibly no.

Mrs. Trichell, the weather being what it is, decided to linger on a day or two, and it is nice to have her hear, for she is a charming person.

What with the rain having knocked the plantation labors into a rest period, +, of course, had lots of little visits, and I even succeeded in getting my hair cut on my rest period around about noon. I had sent word to A. C. Mack some days back that if he didn't have time to desert his tractor for his clippers for a few minutes, he could just run the tractor, - with disks attached, over the back of my perruque and perhaps that would hold things down until cotton planting let up a little.

On the home front, domestically speaking, every thing seems much as usual, with the semi-annual rumpus going on at Celeste's. She apparently gets conscious about every six months that she doesn't seem much of her husband, and to make the sensation even more effective, she starts and endless racket that impells her husband to absent himself more frequently and for more prolonged periods.

But aside from both husband and wife appealing to me for aid and comfort, there is anything else for them to do but follow the old, old pattern of racket and racket, - while I lend a firm shoulder to weep on, and then get on with my labors at Arenbourg...

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April 14th, 1948.
Memorandum: All blue and gold over head, with oozing greens under foot. The plentiful supply of sunshine and moisture, following yesterday's bountiful rain, gives everything at Arenbourg the impression that the Spring sprint is on full force, - and I believe it is.

I opened the day by starting in on weeds and digging Johnson Grass roots. The latter must be of the bamboo family for their net work of roots is astonishing in its growth. It cannot be pulled but must be dug, for it is very brittle, and one little old piece in the ground is sufficient to multiply into an acre. About the only thing that will kill the root is dampness when exposed to the air, and this morning's conditions were ideal for the stuff to sour. I got out a couple of bushel of the stuff before 7:30 and little King helped me for a couple of more hours, so that all in all, we made quite a clearing, - with lots more left for the morrow.

Mrs. Trichell left for home this noon. She talked with J. A. this morning, recommending that he get a wheel chair for his mother, in order she might be the more easily put in contact with her plants and things in the gardens. My opinion was asked for, and I recommended the renting of a chair before purchasing. A wheel chair is fine on a smooth surface, such as concrete, but I'm not sure that it wouldn't tend to shake the daylights out of my patient, moving about foot paths of lawn and somewhat unsmooth surfaces. Then, too, in recent years, a tour about the garden had ever so unfortunate effect upon the Madam who never saw any of her lovely flowers but only this weed and that which this gardener or that one had failed to eradicate. Mrs. Trichell is ever so kindly and a grand person, but of solutions somehow come easy to the casual visitor who has no idea of the peculiarities of the local problems.

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Pilgrims today included a Mr. and Mrs. Morgan of Clarksdale, Miss., - somewhere in the Greenville neighborhood of the Delta country. Mrs. Morgan said she was from Memphis and had gone to school in Baton Rouge so that half her life, it seemed had been spent visiting old plantations in between those two points, - Vicksburg, Natchez, Woodville, St. Francisville, and so on. She said her visit to Melrose was altogether refreshing because, - at long last, - she had found one plantation that differed in so many respects and atmosphere from the somewhat stereotyped ones which had somehow come to have a certain sameness about them. Come to think of it, I believe there is an element of truth in what she had to say. Perhaps it is the element of the mulatto that makes Melrose so, - but on second thought, it must be some other reason, for there are quite a few mulatto plantations that more or less conform to the usual plantation. Mr. Morgan thought it was a combination of factors, and perhaps the fact that one somehow felt the antebellum sensation without the aid of hoop skirts.

What with yesterday's dews and damps, the pole cats must have been out in force, - as they are lovely to do, following a rain. Apparently my dog must have enjoyed a frolic with them, for he smells to high heaven and his presence, sprawled out on my doorstep, is a constant reminder to me of his nocturnal doings. Strangely enough the odor is fused with the fragrance of honeysuckle which is blooming in vast clusters on the fence at the far end of the gallery. The soft Southern breeze wafts this heady perfume along the gallery, and by mixing itself with Ora's wierd aroma, combines to produce a fragrance, the like of which I can't imagine in any other situation.

Last night I was supposed to go to Beaum (M.C.) Mack's house to chat with his family and some visiting kin folk. But just as I was ready to start, Ezra came bye, asking if he could talk a little. It seems he is having some domestic difficulties, his wife being extremely jealous, and threatening to separate from him. All he needed was an opportunity to talk with some one, but it was too late for me to go to the Mack's when he had departed, seemingly much more calm than when he arrived. It is now 8:30, and unless something unexpected claims my confidence within the hour, I shall call on the Mack's only 24 hours late.....

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April 15th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Another marvelous day and much dirt flying at Arenbourg.

I concentrated on weeds for the most part, but paid myself off in a great big dividend by bringing home a huge bouquet of red roses which are nodding sedately here before me in a big old Early American glass vase that looks forever like a glorified and gigantic beer mug.

The red roses seem to be well ahead of the yellow ones this year, but the yellow ones give promise of unfolding their treasures within two or three days.

It was Knipmayer Day and accordingly my morning was busy. After gardening, I had to pass by to see Madam Regard for a few minutes, attend to some out-going mail for the Madam and consult with Robert Anthony before pouring for the Knipmaers. They didn't have any interesting gossip today, although they did set me straight on the accidental drowning at Bermuda on Saturday. I thought it was a child, but it was a man who left a wife and an 18 month old child.

Afternoon pilgrims including a couple wharried just at noon, covered localities from North Dakota to Oklahoma, - Claremore in the latter State, not Norman.

About 4:30, the last visitors seemed almost adamant about going through the big house. I put my big foot down. I had started off by saying No with some politeness, explaining that Henry was very ill, making guests in the house impossible at the present time. Just as I had finished the sentence, Smart Sam Brown who must have been playing with a radio in the house, hit a Boogey-Woogey piece that blared forth astonishingly, and certainly most unexpectedly. One of the guests, - and quite rightly, inquired if Mrs. Henry was especially fond of Boogey-Woogey when very ill. I declared with a perfectly straight face that she was not, but that she had discovered the

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although it was distasteful to her, it somehow did
act as a restorative, and accordingly took a dose
whenever especially weak. The pilgrims did not
get into the house.

Dan Henry had some little tumor on his eye
or his nose or someplace about his face, and J. H.
remarked at supper tonight that Dan had returned
from Shreveport where Dr. Wenk had removed the
thing for him. Disliking the Wenks as they do,
I never could understand how the Henrys would go
to Dr. Wenk, so often referred to as "that Jew",
when plenty of physicians in "atchitoches or Alexandria
could save them a trip to Shreveport.

A number of years ago, when the Wenks were
passing by Melrose every afternoon, I injured
an ankle that had to be treated several times.
I, naturally, always journeyed to town to have
the thing attended to, since I don't care for
Dr. Wenk, - and I reckon if the Henrys knew
that I had done so when a physician was spending two
or three hours here every day, they would have
thought me crazy. Of course, it is quite possible
they would be perfectly right, but at least I
selected someone for whom I had some respect.

I went down to Beau Macks for a little call
last night about 9. Beau's mother-in-law is visiting
them, and greatly enjoyed talking with her. She
is tall with white hair and gold rimmed spectacles,
and puts me in mind of a little of a sepia Edna Mae Oliver,
if you can imagine. We had a glass of wine and
some little cakes, and I was back home a little
after ten. The thing about the woman which fascinates
me is the fact that perhaps 60 years ago she
was born and brought up in the remote situation
that stretches between Little River and Red
River, on the back of Melrose, - and in those years,
as far from a school as she would have been, had
first seen the light of day in slavery times on a
mulatto plantation. And yet she is obviously
well educated and has certain of the graces that
somehow suggest Queen Mary and Edna Mae Oliver,
and withal, in the absence of hats. The next time
I see her daughter, Juanita Mack, I must inquire how
her mother acquired so many attractive attributes.

The April moon begins flooding the White Garden
and I'm wondering if little Miss Ramsey is going to
make her shots of Cane River before it has waned.

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April 16th, 1948.
Memorandum: Your elegant letter of the 13th to hand, together with the returned 59th Street Cross Town transfer, plus the note attached to it.

The demands of the plantation were such that I was
able to read but two pages at today's sitting, and so
I shall set aside the transfer and the attachment, and
arrive at the section of your letter dealing with it at
tomorrow's sitting.

How nice of you to tell me so many interesting things
about your Washington visit, and how much Erika and L. J.
must bless you for having shared it with the former. I
add my blessings, too, for it was bound to have meant a
tremendous heap to both daughter and mother. "Take the
hand, - No that isn't it, it is this way:

"When you take the child by the hand, you take the
Mother by the heart." - and how nobly you did just that.

The May issue of Holiday, - if you haven't already
seen it, has some pictures of Mount Vernon in it. Celeste
chanced to mention it to me today, and I refer to it here,
just in case you haven't run across it as yet.

I'm so glad you like Arlington and Mount Vernon. And
how sweet of you to suggest that it would be ever so nice
sharing the places, to which I can only add that nothing
would mean so much to me as doing just that. And may
I congratulate you for having noticed the Major L'Enfant
marker. You are the only person in all the world with
whom I have ever talked who had seen it. How unexpectedly
and how wonderfully you are forever manifesting such gifts.
Is it any wonder I never cease being filled with admiration.

Some day perhaps we shall have an opportunity in an
off season to visit these lovely places together. Many a
time in the old days, I used to take the Sunday New York Times
with me and spend the entire day sitting on the gallery
at Mount Vernon, reading a little but mostly musing on
Washington's life there, or Lee's happy days at Arlington and
either because I selected off times, - or perhaps not so many
people traveled to those two shrines in those days, but
I can recall some days when almost no one would ever appear.
I liked that, too.

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And speaking of ante-bellum mansions, may I tell you that I traveled to Monticello over C. B. S. or A. B. C. the other night to observe Mr. Jefferson at Monticello at the University of Virginia, etc. I am so glad you were on the same little ether journey, for naturally I was thinking of you all the time, realizing how much you would enjoy the trip and how doubly much it would mean to you after your visit there last autumn. It was all so well done, and I think I had not known before that Edgar Allen Poe was among the young men whom Mr. Jefferson used to invite to his hospital board during their college days.

I never cease to marvel at the lovely homes the men of the 18th century fashioned for themselves, and their splendid situations, which, in spite of the horse-less carriages of today, are so often pleasantly remote. I suppose a few people, like George Vanderbilt at Biltmore, still follow the same pattern of life by housing themselves in such delicious retreats, and yet as I look around at the people I know, - those who have ample means to create such lovely places, I must confess I find few or none who seem motivated by whatever it was so rampant in the 18th century, - a quality or impulse or factor or whatever, to make something so lovely as did so many people did a century or two ago. And naturally, I often wonder how and why this is so.

I can't imagine what I did with the sketch referred to in your letter, together with a tiny pencil sketch of the same subject attached to the larger. I hadn't seen the thing for years, and should be enchanted to give it to you if you should care for it, - if I can find it. Of course I need not tell you that it is always disastrous to clean house, for undoubtedly you, too, have had a hard luck of discovering a million forgotten things, and then peaking them away so securely that you never run up on them again for another decade. But if the thing does turn up, and shall most certainly be enchanted to bounce it in your direction.

You inquire about the persimmons and Mesdames Curie. We lost but one or two of the former, and none of the latter. I shall be able to set in some persimmons the same size as the surviving one, - next autumn, and so we shall in no way miss those who temporarily are absent from their proper places.

One or two of the grandfloras died, but we still have a good half dozen at least, and I shall set in some more replacements during the coming month, I think.

Again my thanks for your nice letter, the reading of which I shall continue on the morrow. It is a pity you have had to be under the weather for such a stretch, but thank heavens it came after the trip, so you had many things to dwell upon in retrospect.

and please slow

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April 18th, 1948.

Two more lovely days, all blue and gold.

And Saturday was particularly nice because it afforded me the balance of your delicious letter of Tuesday.

And may I again, for the millionth time, call you blessed, for having so generously plumbed the mysteries of the 59th Street transfer and, in solving the same, have gone a step further, and settled it but conclusively for a two year stretch. How pleasant is each week when the advent of life keeps the memory of such graciousness ever bright.

A passing pilgrim the other day called my attention to the recent issue devoted to Mr. Churchill, with pictures of Blenheim Palace, home of his ducal ancestor. I was delighted to have old memories recalled, for I used to be vaguely acquainted with the place, and it brought to mind the former Consuelo Vanderbilt who married the Duke of Marlborough in the Episcopal Church, but having turned Catholic, was divorced by the Pope in order she might marry Jacques Balsan who maintained a splendid property in the environs of Paris. Between Holiday and Life, one really is rich in the delights both offer to the eye and revivify for one's memory.

I was sorry to read that you were disappointed in your hopes to visit the National Gallery, for I know full well how near the top you must have held that aspiration. That you should have mentioned it, however, pleases me much for it recalled to mind an account in the N. Y. Times, at the time the Gallery was opened, - an account of the remarkable fountain in one of its courtyards, - a fountain said to have come from Marly-le-Roi. For having thus recalled the item to me, it gave me an opportunity to take pen in hand to write the Directors making inquiry on this point. As you know, it was once my pleasure to follow the course, taken by some of the Marly marbles, following the demolition of the Chateau and its gardens, and I am hoping the Nation Gallery, in assisting me on the perrinations of this particular garden set, may

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provide me with new leads in tracing other objects from the same delicious spot. I shall naturally send along any particulars that may come to hand.

The Wenks came for the week end, - and that is always disastrous to my personal contacts, since none of my friends ever pass this way when such erratic personalities descend on Melrose. But to keep the record straight, I must confess that their arrival was in part due to my own efforts. On Friday afternoon, the Madam asked me to send them a special delivery, asking them to come. I complied with her request, in full realization that the letter would not leave here until Saturday noon and wouldn't reach them before Sunday. After posting the letter, and looking over the mail, - comprising no 1st class items, I betook myself to the telephone and sent them a wire to come this week end. For I figured that Helen and Carolyn, in not coming this week end, might make it next week, and we could get a heap more done without the noisy Wenks all over the place.

With Mr. Bachelier scheduled to arrive on Monday, and being quite alone over Saturday and Sunday, I got caught up on my reading a little. At the moment, I am in the midst of "My Country and My People" by Lin Yutang, and find it grand. In an introduction, Pearl Buck says of it that for ever so long she looked in vain for a book on China, worthy of the subject, and, thanks to Dr. Lin, she has at last found one. I agree with her. This is not the place to speak of its more profound aspects, although I must remark that I was enchanted at a light touch wherein she or rather he remarked upon how unique it was that somewhere in China a nun started a suit against a priest on grounds of infidelity. That strikes me as being the height of something or other in the legal and pseudo-religious field.

And somehow that suggests a slight jolt the other day I received when speaking with a conservative father and grandfather friend of mine when, most casual, in general conversation he responded to a chance question by me: "How many children do you have", by saying with equal casualness: "You mean, by my wife....."

So runs the week out and so begins another. From my window and beyond the deep shadow of the back gallery, a billion moonbeams drench the dew decked White Garden, and how much I wish I might share its loveliness with one urban dweller, - it is so redolent with peace, somehow so filled with a marvelous essence, melting at once the majesty of the faint twinkling stars a million miles away and the stars gleaming in the diadem of one who does so much to make life worth while....

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Dora 9/16/48

April 19th, 1948.

Memorandum: off signed a bit to go on this, 9/16/48

From the enclosure, you will note that poor Dora has had about enough of Oklahoma, which, in reality must be very much an exile.

I am writing him, congratulating him on his thoughts on this subject, pointing out, however, that Shreveport is where Louisiana leaves off and Texas begins, and that while it might have more to offer by way of jobs, being three or times as big, still one, in his situation, since a move Southward is in his dreams, he might just as well move slap on down to Alexandria which is certainly more Louisiana-ish, is closer to the Cane River country, what with the Rands going back and forth, and what's more, it retains some of the military establishments, maintained during the war, wherein he might find something in line with the experience he had for some months in Oklahoma where, as I recall, he worked at an air base or some such, for a time.

You will be interested to learn, as was I, that J. A. has something to do about Life, Time and Fortune in this area. I discovered it this morning when I asked the clerk to convert the note attached to the 59 St. transfer into a check, whereupon he told me J. A. has been fussing at Life since December to straighten out some subscriptions which both he and Kaynie are entitled to, but are not getting. J. A. told me he is convinced that no other great institution in America has such a confusion in some of its departments as this great publishing house, but that he thought that with the remarkable punched up card which you returned with the note, he might succeed in turning the trick without too much excitement. He accordingly gave me a duplicate of his letter to Life, referring to the enclosed check and transfer, and now we shall sit tight and see what will happen. Let's hope some miracle makes it start functioning automatically and to perfection, and you may be sure I shall keep you advised.

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The weather continues marvelous and I got up and at it earlier than usual this morning, in anticipation of Mr. Bachelier's arrival when, for the next day or so, I would not have much opportunity to work unrestrainedly. But Mr. Bachelier didn't arrive, and so I got in a double lick at Arenbourg by being able to return at noon and whale away where I left off in the morning. I reckon Mr. Bachelier may be a little below par in health, or possibly faced with water that is above par, so to speak, for it is said that Little River is unusually high, and possibly that is the reason for his absence from Melrose tonight. I certainly hope he doesn't come until next week, for that will enable me to make another complete round at stirring up the ground around our little floral friends at Arenbourg before the next rain, and I should like to accomplish that ever so much, thus providing them with every assistance in making maximum strides in this Spring's growing season.

And before I forget it, I must tell you about the wheel chair, for I suppose it will roll into the picture on several occasions before long. When Mrs. Trichell was here, she confided to J. H. she thought it would be a wonderful thing for the Madam, thus enabling her to get about the gardens with ease. He asked my opinion. I immediately said: "Yes, by all means, let's try it" But I added I foresaw two negative points: first, that the thing is likely to shake the daylights out of a frail person when leaping over garden paths, in fact anyplace off smooth surfaces, such as cement; and, secondly, that the Madam always has inclined to look for and worry about weeds rather than enjoy the flowers growing log side.

And so J. H. got a wheel chair. - But, - and this is a big one: - he immediately told Aynie, who has a perfect mania for sipping news and a complete genius for up-setting apple carts. Accordingly the day before the chair arrived, he said quite unthinkingly, as is his custom: "You know, Mother, we're getting you a wheel chair. A man in town, after he got so old he couldn't walk any more, he got one, and after sitting in it once, just died, and so we're getting it for you". Whereupon the Madam instantly declared: "Well, you needn't get it because I'm not dreaming of dying and I won't ever sit in the thing". So now it graces the front gallery, untenanted, save for when I give myself a little whizz in it up and down the brick walk.....

2945

April 20th, 1948.

Memorandum:

We were scheduled to have scattered showers today, but not a wisp of a cloud appeared in the blue.

Things continue to grow madly, thanks to the good rain of last Tuesday, but another downpour would make them jump even faster, - and I'm all in favor of that.

Our nights continue luminous with moonlight and heavy with honeysuckle. I remarked upon these things to a Little River darkie this morning at mail time. He told me that once during the war, he had taken himself to Alexandria "to work and get rich", but not having reached the latter point too soon, and because "them big old city lights, looking like they was a short-circuitin' the stars and the moon", he was glad to get back home for a heap of reasons, not the least of which as his desire to see the heavens again as he had always known them until attracted by the bright lights of the city.

And before moving away from the electrical section, let me remark that I learned today that all houses, equipped with current on Melrose, save Puny's, pay a flat rate of \$1.50 per month, which seems quite fair, in view of utility prices obtaining elsewhere about the country. It seems that Puny was the first negro on the place to have his house wired. A mulatto named Friedman, charged him \$25.00 for the job, and a meter was installed. Puny's month bill runs around \$3.50 to \$4.00.

Ezra and Fugabou took a good look at the arrangement of wires at Puny's, following Friedman's failure to get to wire their houses for them, and after a second inspection of the original job, they combined efforts and wired their respective cabins. No meter was installed in the two latter cases, and in no subsequent ones. - I think the two boys have wired 8 or 10 since they started, and instead of charging the \$25.00 rate, they do the job for \$5.00 per house.

Certainly all these particulars can be of no interest, and yet I do think they demonstrate in what fashion light comes to this area, - the system itself being a segment of Mr. Roosevelt's Rural Electrification Program.

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Of other local doings, the bridge is making the most noise. Everyday the sound of pile driving floats in from the river, where a wooden span has now been completely stretched from bank to bank. It seems that the present method of constructing bridges of this type in this locality is first to build a structure of wood on the exact place where the concrete one is to be erected, with the wooden floor of the temporary structure not quite so high as the permanent structure will be. This temporary span is used by the various machines employed in driving steel pilings which are to be sunk along side the original wooden ones, the latter being removed as soon as the steel ones are in place. By this method two bridges are really built instead of one, but with the first one being gradually eliminated as the work on the second one advances, but a single span remains when the final work has been completed.

Although some intervening bushes temporarily cut the view between the terrace at Arenbourg and the East end of the old bridge, it appears to me that when the present structure is removed, we shall not see any bridge at all from our vantage point, thus affording us an uninterrupted view of a "Grand Canal" which, of course, will seemingly add even greater distance to the placid mirror that will stretch South Westward from our situation.

I continue, - but only by dribblets, in reading the Lin Yutang volume, and am much impressed on what he has to say about Chinese family solidarity, parallels of which I view in surprising parallels hereabouts. The author points out how good it is that the family unit functions so perfectly in assisting one individual member or another in times of stress. But he hastens to add that such a system, when carried to an extreme as it appears to be in China, - and elsewhere, tends to limit the horizon of each family to its own family limitations, with the walls of the home rising, figuratively to the height of castle walls, shutting out the humanities existing next door, and making everything beyond the feudal fortress suitable material on which one prey with impunity. I must explore this idea a little further and see how neatly it applies in various family organizations in Mississippi and Louisiana, famous for the successful enterprises of so many different members of a single family.

So many things to talk about, and here I am already run out before I started. But tomorrow is another day....

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2947 Rudolph 9/19/48
Dr. Bachelor
4/19

reduced to a minimum of noise, as was the case in the case of the bridge, April 21st, 1948.

Debarred I, as usual, at night.

Memorandum: The weather continues marvelous, even though we know perfectly well that we are entering a drought condition unless some scattered thunder shower doesn't scatter itself in this neighborhood soon.

And speaking of dry weather calls to mind the armadillo, - only I guess it may be spelled armidillo, my authority being the Madam who sometimes forgets precise letter arrangements. Anyhow, I found one yesterday under the big old magnolia by the side gate. That noble tree, which the mulattoes planted over a hundred years ago, always is the first to bloom in the Melrose gardens. I opened a dozen lovely blossoms yesterday evening, being almost a week behind its normal flowering, which usually transpired on the 12th.

Like Dora and the honeysuckle of a few days back, there mingled a curious and somewhat unpleasant combination of scents aound the old tree. On looking around a bit, I discovered that the heavy perfume of the great white flowers was permeated by the unholy smell of decomposing flesh, and there on the ground, I discovered a big armidillo which apparently the dogs had done to death a few days before. The animal was about the size of the one I ran up on at Arenbourg last year about this time, perhaps 2 and a half or three feet long. I must say they are a strange looking animal and there is something about them that always seems to scare the day-lights out of the darkies, albeit they are perfectly harmless and apparently wouldn't mind being on friendly terms with humanity generally, - if only humanity were a little more that way inclined.

Today's pilgrims included two nice men from Houston. One of them I liked especially. In appearance, he somehow suggested a somewhat slimmer Major Bowes. He and his friend were occupying one of the camps on Melrose, - over by St. Augustin's Church.

When our little tour of Melrose was about half over, he said he and his wife had recently read a book about some section of the "river country", and that there was something about what I told him that recalled the book to his mind ever so vividly. He thought hard for

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a moment and finally gave up, saying he couldn't remember the name of the plantation, as mentioned in the book.

"This is Yucca", I hazarded.

Automatically he threw up his arms in glee, declaring that he had to run - not walk, - to the nearest telegraph station to wire his wife he had found the place, and to come over forthwith.

For the average run of pilgrims, I don't bother to take them inside my house, but this was an exceptional case, obviously. And so I invited him to come and see the desk and typewriter on which his Children of Strangers had been written, the portrait of Grandpere and other members of the family, plus original pieces of furniture which figured in the novel which had delighted him so much.

It's always a great pleasure to share Yucca River with such people, and if his wife does come over, I shall do an elaborate tour for her and serve her some creole coffee which she probably won't like, - but some cream will be provided for her so the brew can be diluted to ordinary coffee if she prefers. My only hope is that she doesn't turn out to be about as interested in her husband's enthusiasms as, say, that Cleveland lady whose husband, in the paint business, used to want to share nice things with, - and apparently to little success.

Following last week-end's pandemonium, my patient is naturally much below par in all respects, and only by the greatest effort, can she get one foot ahead of the other to move from one room to the next. Her appetite is almost nil, and with the thermometer in the upper 80's today, she insisted on keep her butane going full tilt. The depression and uncertain mental operations that accompany such a condition adds to the problem which Sister and her husband don't even seem to realize they create, - and having thus created, move on off the stage for those of us remaining to grapple with. Momentarily I am alone with it, since none of the "enrys are about, being in South Louisiana for several days and I know not where they might be.

But there is the compensating said of things, wit the magnolias unfolding and everything looking bright and gay in the horticultural department and the little mimosas at Arenbourg climbing far beyond my reach and daily climbing higher.....

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April 22nd, 1948.

Memorandum:

The weather continues hot and dry. But I am enormously refreshed, thanks to the arrival of your nice long letter in today's post.

I have already drunk deep from its first two pages, with the promise of three more for tomorrow's sitting.

I can readily imagine your satisfaction in realizing a two week interval in the South American whirligig, plus the feeling of contentment to find yourself at home for a week end, all by yourself. Isn't it remarkable how people feel sorry for you, - or honestly believe there is something wrong with your head, - or both, - if you declare you are perfectly contented to remain at home for "one interval of transcribed quiet", as a Columbia announcer once inadvertently remarked.

What with all the incoming post from abroad and from local communities, I know perfectly well that you must have spent most of your Sunday evening conversing with friends through the written word, and how much richer am I for your generosity in devoting such a nice long chat to me.

At today's sitting we proceeded as far as your most excellent synopsis of Dr. Hamilton's booklet. Naturally I am keenly interested in all the particulars the pamphlet contained, and I must confess I was struck by the parallel you pointed out, as between North Carolina's efforts at manuscript preservation and my own enthusiasms revolving around the same situation in Louisiana.

I didn't know before that Sir William Dunbar's account book was in North Carolina, but while it seems to me a pity original manuscripts of this type didn't find a home down this way where the student and the original places mentioned in the papers would be most likely to coincide, still I am thankful the institution has made such splendid provision for these things. In passing, I might remark that B. L. O. Wales:

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Diary is also in the same institution, - far from home, but more important, all safe. We have a transcribed copy of that particular item, made along about 1940 or 1941, and someday all such records, originating down this way, may perhaps be transcribed and made available for people who prefer to do their studying in the atmosphere of the places where the events transpired.

The primary virtue of North Carolina is that it provides a safe housing place for a vast assortment of precious documents from all over the South. The best thing about having a given community preserving its own documents, - as in my plan for Louisiana-Mississippi collections, - is the fact that the individual items do not get buried in the far flung accumulation, and, - equally important, - additional papers and particulars about an individual collection can often be added to, with the passage of years, - private letters turning up unexpectedly, references to a particular individual in the writings of other people, etc. Thus, while North Carolina may preserve a single item by or about B. C. Wailes, with little likelihood of additions being made, down this way an imposing collection of papers, journals, account books, newspaper clippings, etc., might well be added to round out a perfect full length portrait, were the original document, filed in Carolina, kept near the surface in Louisiana or Mississippi. Although my mind switches away from all this momentarily, I am reminded of something I read last night from Lin Yutang, concerning various literary manifestations in China. He was speaking of the difficulty of translating old Chinese into other tongues, and the equally difficult task of finding a Chinese scholar who can translate Western tongues into Chinese. He cited, as a case in point, - and you will love this one, - of an instance wherein a Chinese translator went after Victor Hugo's works, rendering from French into Chinese this somewhat surprising title: "Notre Dame de Paris", - into "My Paris Wife". "Selon l'usage ancien et solennel", the Knipayers passed by this morning. Dr. A. told me the New Orleans psychiatrist, Dr. Holbrook, told him last week that Dr. Worsley is in a very serious condition. On another front, he told me bloodhounds last week end were taken fromatchitoches to Cloutierville to work on the Dynog-Bascoe murder. He had no details. There are Bascoes sharing M. Bachelier's house, in Mmm.

2951

2951

Memorandum:

Thirty million lines wouldn't begin to express my surprise and delight when today's post brought another nice fat letter to hand, hard on yesterday's unexpected plaisir.

Today being Field Day for all negro youths and maidens, - pupils or ex-pupils of years back, my Ethiopian headed out for town early-early this morning, and so with some reluctance, I had to forego the pleasure of continuing yesterday's reading today, and accordingly placed today's incoming letter with enclosures in my strong box along side yesterday's unfinished epistle, awaiting tomorrow's return to normalcy with as best grace I can.

Madam Regard is one of the most perfect ladies I know in kindness and manners, but if mail chases to arrive for her when mid-morning coffee is being served, she never can resist the impulse to open the envelope to explore its contents, acknowledging, as she does so, that she realizes she is putting a crack in ordinary social convention. Invariably I smile inwardly as I try to picture her state of control were she ever forced to put aside an incoming item for 24 hours at a stretch.

The dry weather continues, although the prediction is for rain tonight. I write at 9, a brilliant moon flooding the White Garden, without a cloud in the skies to dim the senescent stars.

But if they are a mind to, rain clouds can roll up in no time in this region, and I'm hoping a hundred springs will be gurgling above the tree tops before another dawn arrives.

"Carrying coals to Newcastle" no longer holds any meaning, I suppose, now that that English town in the mining regions has lost its dominant place in British industrial fields. But the phrase came back to mind today when I discovered that many of the big banana roots, (Orinoco), had frozen during the January cold spell, - the first time such a disaster ever caught up with the Orinocos on Melrose.

1223

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But for some reason, not clear to me, - for Arenbourg is naturally cooler than Melrose, ours didn't freeze, and so I carried back a few to plant before my front gallery where last year's roots had lost out.

The high, hot winds continued all day, and I spaded away at Arenbourg, each shovelful I turned had all the aspect of an embryo dust bowl. But the loosening of the earth puts everything in readiness for that shower which they say is in the offing. At the moment, the Arenbourg crynoids are unfolding their splendid blossoms, - plenty of red ones, and a few very noble salmon, white and pink ones. And mighty fine they are, too. The sun was too high when I returned home this morning, and so I shall not pick me a fine bouquet until before sun-up, if any, in the morning, for as you know, flowers picked too late in the day in these latitudes, don't thrive so well in a vase as those that are gathered before the heat gets really turned on.

For no reason on earth, I had an idea for advertising which I hope will never get to the ears of those who might put it into operation. What surprises me however, is the fact that the thing hasn't been conceived and set in motion long before this. The idea is based on the electric eye, such as those used in railroad stations, - like the Pennsylvania, in restaurants, etc., which sets doors to swinging when a body breaks the beam by passing through it. Setting up such beams along any roadway would set off a record, announcing, as from nowhere, the virtues of one produce or another, from a concealed disk that might easily be incorporated in the immediate landscape, and before one knew it, the entire trip, say from Manhattan to Greenwood Lake would be a constant admonition from every bend in the road for the passing motorist to immediately stop at the first drug store and buy some Carter's Little Liver Pills, or some such. It certainly would be a horrible medium to be foisted on the traveler, and yet I must say I'm astonished somehow hasn't thought that one up before this, patented the idea, made a million dollars, and driven the country crazy.

But enough of this silly business, and I beg your pardon for cluttering up your correspondence with this tripe. It is good to know I have such nice items from you and of you awaiting me on the morrow...

1223

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Memorandum: I think your suggestion sweet - sweet, - making May 9th Arbor Day at Arenbourg.

I read your letter on Saturday noon, and immediately got in touch with on Watchitoches house possessed of a single grandiflora. Yesterday it appeared, was a lucky time for such efforts, for I rounded up some more potential forms to grace the magnolia collection, through a friend in Alexandria. A week hence, and all these will be rounded up and the spade will fly at Arenbourg in making preparations to set out your most lovely of trees on the impending natal date.

May I tell you again how sweet I think your pro and prevision issues forth from this bend of the river.

And I must thank you for so many other particulars. I'm glad you liked the St. Francisville graveyard idea, and I shall appreciate it ever so much if you will kindly set aside the article you mention, concerning the New Orleans man associated with this subject. I would ask you to hold the article, however, and I shall ask you for additional points in it when I get a little further along in the work. How wonderful of you, always having anticipated such unexpected items that sooner or later I start beating a drum about.

And thanks, too, for giving me the most interesting excerpts from the George Washington papers. The inquiries about the housekeeper's virtues were grand, and his reference to difficulties with Major L'Enfant and the latter's inclination toward being difficult were most enlightening. Should we ever run across Jules Jusserand's little book containing a biographical sketch of the Major, we shall perhaps unravel the meaning of this line.

And may I further thank you for having shared

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information with me regarding the progress of the Ponge menage. Isn't it good that there appears a glimmer of light pointing the way to a happier solution in their domestic set-up. I agree with you that it would be nice to know if the husband sees the little leaves floating from here to there. I hope he doesn't, - primarily because I have a feeling that sooner or later, a rift may widen in that household, and in such an event, it would be pleasant to realize that Anita holds all the personal correspondence confidential, - although heaven knows, every line of it is innocent enough.

It is a source of great satisfaction to be able to report that we had a nice little scattered shower late this afternoon, with a drizzle continuing well into the dark. It will help things mightily on our side of the fence, although the Cotton Farmer, - he never needs rain, although I'm quite sure today's little sprinkle will benefit the crop mightily in localities a few miles back from Cane River where the stiff land, as opposed to the more mellow soil, inclines to get too hard for plants to grow when the sun bakes it too steadily over a prolonged period.

On the morrow, Mr. Bachelier will be here, I suppose, and I think he will be impressed by the growth of pears and roses at Arenbourg, and I shall be as happy as a clam, whether viewing them with him, or by myself.

The Joe Henrys came over from Beaumont on Saturday noon, having told no one of their impending visit. Shortly after they headed out or home on Sunday, Mrs. Rand and her sister, Julia, came in spite of the rain, they did quite a tour of the iris garden, and about supper time, returned to their camp. After the "adam" had folded up, they returned bringing several guests with them to meet the "adam" for the first time, - he had received flat on her back.

After a brief visit at the big house, they all came over to see me, - Mr. and Mrs. Corenille and Dr. and Mrs. Niessen, and so on. It was first dark before they left, and after that, I went to Celeste's to chat with Mr. Abmrose Hertzog and his very intelligent wife, at present visiting at Magnolia, having just arrived from Eau Claire, Wisconsin. And so the goes and so am I happy, thanks to you.....

2955

April 26th, 1948.

Memorandum:

You will forgive me if this note seems less extensive than usual, for this machine appears to be acting up a little, - this is my third start because of some mechanical playfulness, - and secondly because Mr. Bachelier arrived 12 hours ago, - it is a little after 10 p.m., and has stuck closer than a brother.

Knowledge has been poured forth with the greatest abandon, and should you care to have me set you straight on almost any subject from the anthropological aspects of the Polynesians to the geographical nature of each bank of the Congo from its mouth to its source, I really ought to be able to supply any of the data from memory of such particulars, supposedly tucked away in my brain during the past half day.

Our conversations carried us so far afield that I didn't learn much in the field of local gossip, although one or two side glances at the latter set me straight about a few Parish particulars. For instance, the Mr. Charles Martin, spoken of in a recent National Geographic Magazine as having produced a remarkable apple on his orchard in Natchitoches Parish, is known or at least his family is pretty well known in the Gorham area. I may have mentioned before that a few years back, Gorham had the somewhat dubious distinction of having a higher crime rate than Chicago, - per capita, of course. And figuring prominently among the figures going to make up such an imposing claim to fame are such families as the Bynogs, the Martins, the Bascoes, etc. Charles Martin may have stirred up a new apple, but other Martins appear to have poorly imitated William Tell, frequently missing the apple but striking the human base on which the fruit rested. As for the recent ambushing of one Bynog by one Basco, it seems this latest hill-billy business is but another knotch in an ancient family feud, this particular Bynog's brother having killed one of the Bascoes not long ago. It's all pretty dull, but something to be remembered when one gets a sermon tossed gratuitously at him on the text of white superiority.

2956

You may readily understand that I haven't able to do much reading during the past 24 hours, although I was successful in clipping off a couple of pages. Lin Yutang does a very nice chapter on Chinese concepts in gardening, and gives one to understand that nothing in that field could be more abhorrent to a Chinaman than LeNotre's accomplishments at Versailles. In sampling the Celestial Empire's writer in the field of music, I found myself realizing that to a Chinaman, the music of Mozart would be equally at odds with their preferences. For myself, I have always felt a most intimate relationship to exist in the gardening and music departments as typified by the well ordered parterres of LeNotre and the equally perfect movements of Mozart, and because I love both and sense in both a common expression satisfying me completely, I shall probably never be able to comprehend much satisfaction in the same fields, as interpreted by the Chinese artists, - and particularly in Music, for never yet have I listened to a tune coming from beyond the Great Wall that satisfied any emotion within me.

When looking over the pears and things at Arenbourg, r. Bachelier expressed himself as being surprised they were doing so nicely. He told me that one day last Winter the Thermometer went down to 3 below zero, - a fact which I hadn't realized before, and since sub-tropical things aren't supposed to flourish under such conditions, it is really wonderful, I suppose, that so many things did survive.

He further expressed himself as surprised at the obvious weakening of my patient since his last visit of a month or six weeks back, and couldn't believe the Wenks would have pulled and pushed her over such a wide arc in the garden. I am glad to say she is much better this week than last, what with a comparatively quiet week end behind her, and she continues to talk about Ashville, telling everyone she is going there this summer, - but I know perfectly well she never will.

My friend, Peter, is having domestic difficulties at the moment. He lives with a no account bag whom he gets after with a stick, I am told, and apparently she is beginning to tire of the game. Peter waited for 2 and a half hours on my back gallery tonight, hoping to discuss his problem, preparatory to leaving Melrose for Alexandria, - but my little River guest "out-sot" him, and so turns the world....

2957

April 27th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Another surprise in today's post, for I had not expected a letter. But yours of Friday came safely to hand to make me enchanted with life in general.

I probably shall not get around to touch on all points at this sitting, for every sentence held much that we might go into for more than one sitting. Then, too, I write rather late, at the conclusion of a hot, busy day, during which my "little shadow" kept ever so close to me from 6 o'clock this morning, when I found him awaiting me on my doorstep, on my return from Arenbourg.

First off let me thank you for having mentioned the copy of Ebony. It came to hand quite promptly, and I can't imagine how I happened to omit any mention of its receipt, for I was altogether delighted with the pictures, including the advertisements, which I carefully explored from cover to cover. For a day or two I held it constantly beside my typewriter, hoping I would be able to round up someone to read me some of the textes, and I suppose I delayed mentioning its safe arrival in anticipation of speaking more intelligently about its contents, - and ended up by having to play patience in the exploration department, - and so ended up by not mentioning it at all. I hope you will always mention any uncertainties, as in the present instance, - as will I, should they ever arise, - and in that way we shall always rest assured that nothing has been lost, - or chewed up by the T. and P.'s iron horse.

Your letter was so full of such a variety of things that I know not where to start in. I must say I was flattered that you should have recalled my interest in "Swann's House", to the extent of quoting from a former communication. I continue to read the volume and like it ever so much. Naturally I was much interested that an American publisher should be bringing out "Les Plaisirs et Les Jours", - a collection of vignettes

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which "little Marcel" did everything in his power to discourage people from reading, once he got to going on "A la Recherche du Temps Perdu", - forever claiming "Les Plaisirs" to be nothing more than a vanity thing of no merit or interest, even though critics usually declared that these random sketches did reveal something of the author's talent, although perhaps they promised little before the public had ultimately turned back to explore the volume, - after first reading his major opus. I couldn't imagine the American edition would have much appeal.

How nice you have seen the fountains at the National Gallery. I have received a letter from that institution which I am not enclosing in this letter, as I want to get the name of the writer so I may respond to his note forthwith. It seems their origin is not early but Versailles, - but more of that anon.

And so you saw Arch of Triumph. From what you tell me, it must have been a wash out. I am opposed to Hollywood doing films that so alter the original story as to make it a disappointment to the person who has read it and something of an insult to the reputation of the author whom the public naturally suppose, I imagine, to have written a story like the thing they see paraded on the screen. I am certainly glad I read the novel, for I thought it virile and powerfully created in spots, but I'm glad I don't have to see the movie.

And thanks for telling me about Frances P. Keyes and her latest undertakings. I'm wondering if her volume, - "Once on Esplanade" ever appeared. I liked that title. And so she is currently doing on about "Dinner at Antoine's". Well, I declare. As for the one in the offing, - about the rice country, I was under the impression she had undertaken that one two or three years back when she is said to have bought the Kaplan house at Crowley, La., - a 1904 house, in the rice country where she was said to have been engaged in her rice business. What a bag she is.

And may I call you both blessed and noble for having rounded up the several copies of Life which will undoubtedly reach me within the next day or two. How characteristically thoughtful and how very much - shall enjoy them, each the more because of its origin. In the mean time, let's hope that the subscription itself will begin functioning so the file may continue to mount steadily. And thanks again for the copy of Ebony which I am hoping to be able to go into shortly, and about which I shall speak at greater length immediately thereafter....

0303

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Nat'l Gallery of Art
4/27/48

April 28th, 1948.

Memorandum:

The weather continues in a pattern of perfection.

J. A. finds the cotton, just out of the ground, to be the prettiest he remembers having ever seen, and every pecan tree holds the promise of a bumper crop, each branch so heavily laden with clusters of embryo fruit that it appears they will all have to be sprayed to remove at least half of crop as it advances in growth to save the trees from being torn down by their own abundance. Of course a lot of adverse things, like hail, etc., can greatly alter the situation, but up to now it was never so rosey.

At Arenbourg things are doing nicely, too. The noon day thermometer readings of 90 fall to 60 by midnight, with the accumulating dew refreshing all our plants, all of which seem intent on growing madly at the moment.

A while before the sun peeped over the horizon this morning, I was busy swinging a weed cutter, drenched to the skin by the heavy dew, - and loving it. The roses were especially lovely at that hour, so marvelously fragrant and so richly red and golden yellow in that light. I gathered me another big old bouquet of crinums, - red ones, salmon and white, and they weight down my desk here before me with almost too much majesty.

This morning I breakfasted alone, what with Mr. Bachelier having returned to Little River. Yesterday morning he arrived at my house before the breakfast tray and we poured our coffee together. But that brings up a sidelight on certain aspects of plantation life, as come to the surface in these parts from time to time. Both Mr. Bachelier and I have our early morning coffees black, but have hot milk with our breakfast coffee. When the tray arrived, there were two pots of coffee, 2 pots of hot milk, the eggs, bacon, toasts, etc., - and two demi-tasses. I inquired about

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the standard size coffee cups.:

"Us-es used to have four but we done broke
two on Sunday and the Madam's she's usin' one of 'em
what's left".

Billions for expense but only three coffees
cups on the plantation, isn't that marvelous.

J. H., always good natured, was quite gay at
supper tonight. He remarked that "Abelle Williams,
a bag on the place whose husband is in the Army, but
who supplants her monthly Government check by the
old-old profession, had complained to him because
Peter, who lives with her, has beaten her mightily
of late, both with his fists and with a big old stick.
I reckon nobody would care if Peter killed her, but
J. H. took the matter in his pseudo-serious fashion
telling Maybelle the Government wasn't really doing
half it should for her, - on the side he declared he
has ten times more than she ever had in her life, and
that she should write to "nole Sam, telling him to do
better by her. She asked him to tell Peter not to
stay with her any more, and so after she had left the
office, J. H. took the matter up with Peter, explaining
to him that if "aybelle needed beating, that was
alright, but he mustn't beat her too hard because
that was against the law. He said the Madam:
"I declare, J. H., you're a sight!", - and she was
perfectly right, don't you think so.

Switching back to Arenbourg, I am delighted to
be able to report that - talked with a nurseryman
Alexandria today, and he tells me he thinks will
be able to supply us with a few grandiflora by the end
of next week. They must be planted soon, if they are
to stand a chance this year, and I am hoping the sunshine
will hold until the day they arrive, when showers may
start descending as madly as they please, for the
newly transplanted grandifloras will be able to take
as much as may be dished out.

I really can't believe it, but it does actually
appear that a couple of the better gardenias which
I thought were dead, - along with the rest, are be-
ginning to manifest signs of little green leaves. These
particular ones are four or five years old, and if they
do survive, will have a good start over the cuttings
which I am nursing along in sand at the moment,
hoping they will be large enough to set out at
Arenbourg in February. So things grow, thanks
to you and the million inspirations you shed
on Arenbourg.....

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2361 Carolyn Ramsey
about 4/26/48

April 29th, 1948.
Memorandum: May I tell you that the back numbers of Life
came to hand in today's post, again demonstrating for
the billionth time how thoughtful one person can be.

What with this and that claiming most of my time to-
day, I haven't had an opportunity to turn through them as
yet. I plan on taking them to bed with me in about half
an hour. With sleep settling gently upon me, - with Life
grasp is lessening firmness in both hands, my dreams should
be pleasant enough, especially as the thought of the bestower
of Life rests in the secret most place in my heart.

I did grab off just time enough to turn through one
issue for a few pages, - the one containing the color plates
of some of the masterpieces in the German Art collection, -
and the sight of them was enough to make me impatient the
balance of the day, just to get back to them.

I am enclosing, or rather sending under separate cover,
a nice letter from Carolyn Ramsey which really sounds as
though she would like to get going on the Cane River and
the St. Francisville graveyard, which is certainly good for
our side. This letter has been here for some days, and only
this morning, just before mail time, did I get around to rip
off a response. I have held the letter, trying to figure
out some way I could impart some of its paragraphs to the
Madam without including them all. Carolyn, of course, is
a swell person without the vaguest notion of more than
genuine friendship for me, but knowing my patient as I do,
I realize that on reading "Francois dear", she would
immediately go into a panic for fear someone had designs on
my affection, - the mere thought of which might instantly
short-circuit any opportunity of joint labors with Carolyn,
just as happened in the cases of Mrs. Moore and Mr. Pipes,
not to mention Mr. Belle. Otherwise, I think she would
really enjoy the letter, and isn't it a pity her fear of
loosing me makes it impossible to share practically all
correspondence, and particularly at a time when she receives
so little.

Gradually she grows more frail. The clerk told me this
noon at dinner that J. H. received a letter from Sister
asking him if he would please consent to the Madam visiting
her in Shreveport for ten days. The clerk said he saw a copy of
the letter.

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of J. H.'s immediate response in the negative. Thank Heavens. I haven't seen J. H. alone in several days, but probably shall on the morrow, and he will tell all.

Characteristic of Sister's mental gyrations is the fact that when at Melrose a week ago Saturday, she wouldn't speak to J. H., while in a letter to her "other today," apparently written about the time the request letter to J. H. was being penned, she told her "other how perfectly marvelous he is. "You don't have to be, but it helps out a lot if you are....."

Tonight there is a party at St. Augustine's School on Little River. Two of the pupils came out this morning to invite me to attend the frolic but I declined. Peter, Mr. Brew and "little King" passed this way about first dark, asking if I wouldn't like to walk out with them, but I sent them on their way without me. I love to go to their little parties, but 4:30 arrives fairly early these days, and I get a maximum of pleasure laying the foundation stones of our Kingdom at Arenbourg these important growing days.

I never have accustomed myself to the early ending of the school year in so many of the local schools for negro children. Officially they are supposed to open the Autumn semester in October, but because of cotton picking and pecan gathering, the children never attend until well into November, or even December. Thus the April closing date, what with Christmas and Easter holidays thrown in for vacation, seems to allow a pretty limited span of weeks for teaching. Slowly the requirements are being extended, I believe, but Lord Tennyson hit the nail on the head in speaking of scientific advancement, we he observed "we creep from point to point", - although he may have crept without an "a", - I'm not certain.

As I glance backward over Mr. Bachelier's recent visit, I laugh to myself when I recall a conversation he was holding with the Madam. In telling some tale, the name of one of the characters appearing in it slipped his mind temporarily. He apologized whereat the Madam, by way of sympathy, said that he shouldn't worry about that, for she was forever having lapses of memory, and assured him that he would eventually recall the name.

"Oh, of course I will but only when I'm alone and haven't anyone to tell it to."

I must recommend a cat to him. After all, when I want to blow off steam, I can lecture my old cat by the hour, and never is there a word of argument thrown back at me, in fact by the calm acceptance of all I have to say, my feline friend apparently agrees with every assertion, regardless of its preposterousness at face value.

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1963

2963 Dora 4/17/48

Memorandum: April 30th, 1948. Another lovely day, and more promised for Saturday, with just a slight hint of scattered showers for Sunday, - which, I hope, the Weather Man will actually deliver.

But the dews continue heavy so that our little green friends at Arenbourg are doing ever so nicely.

Today's post consisted of the enclosure from Dora and the pictures of St. Francisville graveyard which I am sending along to Carolyn to give her some idea of what the tree and architectural set up is like in that region. If I remember correctly, she said something about getting a feeling of Spring in the subject, but I think a few nice autumn leaves would do nicely for one or two shots.

I laughed to myself at Dora's recommendation for making layers on the Forscati magnolia at Melrose. I think you are acquainted with the process, scraping the bark from a limb of a tree, placing it on the ground, and holding it the same there until roots begin taking hold of the ground at that point. Then cutting the limb free from the parent tree, and a year hence transplanting the newly formed tree where ever one wishes.

I gather Dora remembers that there is a Forscati rather than recalling what the local one looks like. It is perhaps 12 to 15 feet tall, with branches perhaps 3 to 5 feet in length, beginning about 7 or 8 feet from the ground. If my mental calculations are correct, one might find it a little difficult "making both ends meet", as it were.

Of course there is another system or possibly a dozen, one being to fill a flower pot with earth, preparing the limb as indicated above, and then fastening the pot to the branch so the exposed portion of the limb will rest in the flower pot, and so accomplish practically the same creation. But in these warm climes, a flower pot swinging some 8 feet up in the air, can do quite a bit of swinging and can require a heap of water being poured onto the branch daily. And with all the hazards taken into account one has a pretty good break if one in one thousand of such contraptions produce the desired result.

I think one

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would save much time and money by merely ordering a good new Forscati, merely running the risks of it not growing from that point on. For the Dormons to whom time is even less than relative, this pot-layering would be just the thing, but I had rather direct my efforts in making something grow than to exhaust my good nature on coaxing the thing to think about starting to make up its mind.

Yesterday was Knipmayer Day, and I think I didn't tell you any good names because he didn't have any unusual lists in his Thursday clinic. He thought O'Prize Hilaire was quite good, but I didn't find it exceptional. If one begot twins, naming them after O'Prize nad O'Levy, - the latter being another youth I know, that combination might be alright, but still it wouldn't be very extraordinary.

Well, among other things on today's program was the annual visit of the D. D. T. sprayers. I hear different opinions expressed by local citizens as to the efficacy of this year's applications, - "ugabou, for example, declaring the current efforts to be highly successful while Aurellia declares it hasn't slowed up a single mosquito. A billion bees began attacking the mud walls on my front gallery the other day, perforating the wall as though a cannon of grape had been fired at it broadside. I directed the sprayers to concentrate on that spot first. Last year they slaughtered the bees with one whiff. This year, - at sundown, - 7 hours after a soaking, the place seemed buzzing with bees, so I suspect we shall have to get after the arish politicians who are trying to get rich too fast on D. D. T.

I am hoping my first reaction may prove incorrect, and perhaps by morning every insect on the place will be in whatever heaven insects head for, after hitting the real spray. But if they persist on living through today's barrage, I shall denounce the Parrish officials first, and then mix some of the stuff for myself and see what can be accomplished. The best commercial spray on the market, it is said, contains five per cent D. D. T., but we have some stuff on the plantation, used for spraying cattle, and it is fifty per cent D. D. T. - and something tells me that one blast of that stuff from a spray gun ought to land my local bees and mosquitoes into the middle of next week.

I find it premature to mention the matter to Bora or to Carolyn, but my thought is that should I be unable to get any time off to myself this summer to work on the St. Francisville thing, perhaps I can get Bora to do something about it for me. It will be time enough to bring up the matter when and if circumstances seem to require it, forcing me to concentrate exclusively on Trenbourg and hoping for a chance to undertake the next idea in the succeeding go-round....

2965

2965

May 2nd, 1948.

Memorandum: So nice, your letter in Saturday's post, and so many things to talk about, - if only you and I both in our respective places didn't have quite so many pilgrims.

In the same post came the enclosed letter. The Madam asks me to send it along to Rudolph for comment, but I am sending it to you first, and if you will please return it at your convenience, I shall forward it to him. There is no rush about it, and should present demands on your time prevent you from returning it at all, I shall easily be able to cover. The particulars about Kenneth and his Hindou were so extraordinary, however, I thought you would be interested in reading Robin's account.

The whole hocus-pokus is a fine example of the pitfalls credulous people run into when entranced by people who can foretell the future. I don't see much advantage in the assurance that one will be healed of one malady on a given day and hour if the same fore-caster fails to warn you that on being cured you are on the verge of being burned up. As for myself, I think I would prefer to be forewarned of disaster on the assumption that I would eventually find out I was getting along alright in physical departments to which I was accustomed.

Under separate cover I am sending two photographs of the big house and one of this one in a package suggesting it might contain records, which it does not. These are photos taken for the Library Commission last summer, I guess it was, and the ones of the big house are quite good, I think. You may have seen as good ones, but I thought you might care to put these in your scrapbook or some such.

You may picture my surprise this afternoon sitting with the Madam to see the lady doctor walk in. Not finding me in my house, she had come to the Madam's, leaving her husband, a Dr. Knowlton or Nellerton or some such and tax two other guests at my house. I left her with the Madam and came over to entertain the New Orleans people while Dr. Eleanor chatted with the Madam for a few minutes.

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Later I sent Don and the gentleman doctor, - a former friend of Lyle's, - over to the big house and the lady doctor came over here for a little chat.

First off she said to tell you what a blessing the reading table had been to her during these past difficult weeks, for, thanks to you and it, she was thus able to recline and read with ease, - which was the most helpful thing during her illness.

She says the New Orleans doctors have recognized the possibility that she might recuperate the quicker if she had something to do for a few hours each day that would really provide interest for her. Accordingly she has decided to associate herself with the Public Health Service in Mississippi, - either in the Jackson area or in Natchez. She is writing to let me know within the next week or so. Her husband will remain with Paul Veith, - Paul and his five noisy children. I am glad she will be away from both husband and from their friends' children, for both of the two groups may be nerve-racking without her realizing it. I think I told you Don was shot down over France and thereafter spent a number of years in a Silesian or Pomeranian prison camp, the net result being that he can't sit still two minutes. Perhaps husband and wife will both benefit from the separation during week end days, for under such circumstances as they now live under, they probably are bound to get into each other's perruque's, without realizing it.

There was no dew, for a wonder, last night, but an overcast sky today induced a degree of humidity for our floral friends at Arenbourg. I wish it would rain in the same gentle fashion it did last Sunday, but the weather says No. I thought of you so intently this morning when making a little round at Arenbourg, - not to labor but merely to look. Your mimosas are really looking fine and the pears are growing madly. As a souvenir, I brought home a nice bouquet of red, yellow and pink roses which nod sedately here on my desk before me, and looking at them, - they're so lovely, it is but natural, of course, that my thoughts should take a Northwesterly direction.

Taking a page from your benevolence, I should like to share a gift of "ralines", just come to hand as a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Gage of Austin. They go forward in the same mail as this letter. Perhaps you can readily manage them all at one sitting, which would be good, or with A. J., or possibly get them headed for Dusseldorf. It's so good to have someone to share with, even though the object isn't important, except to "us-es".....

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Monday, May 3rd, 1948.

Memorandum:

Don't you think we might as well indicate the day of the week on the date lines. It just occurred to me that lots of times in reading old letters, I found great satisfaction in discovering, - by some chance phrase in the body of the note, that the day chanced to be this one or that within the spread of a week, and sometimes I think blue Monday or red Saturday might make a difference in coloring the reading sometimes.

But blue this Monday was merely a tint in the sky, for I found myself quite gay all day, only regretting that all the showers passed us by yesterday.

Today's mail brought a note from little Miss Alberta, declaring that she will arrive on Wednesday of this week, which may mean anything from then on through until Saturday. It's going to be nice having her here for a couple of weeks. When the Madam gets tired, she always enjoys taking a crack at little Miss A., - usually by giving a dig at Lyle's character, which she knows will nettle little Miss A. no end, for to the latter, he was a paragon of all the virtues. But usually the Madam doesn't know how big the brick bats are that she tosses in Miss A.'s direction, and for the most part, little Miss A., by failing to comprehend the import of the Madam's remarks, fails to comprehend, - and so the two old dears really get along a lot better than the average observer would suppose possible.

Also in the morning's post came the enclosures. I was able to get Mrs. Wood's letter read to me alright, but couldn't get anywhere with Dr. Mercer's.

I am wondering if I may impose upon your good nature to the extent of asking that you glance through the latter and see if you can make out any of the sentences. If, by any chance, you should, I would deem it a great service if sometime a typed copy might be made, for I should like to send a typed copy to Dr. Butler, not that he is much interested in William Newton Mercer, but merely because I think it might sometime awaken a sensation in his mind that I really do, even though he who occupies his house, doesn't.

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From a casual glance at the Mercer letter, I notice no stamp, indicating it may have been posted prior to the introduction of postage stamps into the Natchez country along about 1840 - 1845. If he happens to refer to his daughter, Anna, - as he almost always did, that would reveal the letter to be written prior to 1852, when Anna died in Paris. I suppose the letter of no particular interest, still I am curious to know the nature of its contents. But I ask you most especially, - please do not make a transcription at the present time. After all, there are too many demands on your energies at the moment, and if I don't receive the thing within the next twelfth month, that will be ample time.

I shall write Mrs. Wood a letter tonight, thanking her for this precious missle, and asking her how much she would value her grandmother's diaries. As I recall, I asked her that question about a year ago and never got a response. Perhaps we'll have better luck this time.

In the packages going forward to you today, - the ones covered by yesterday's note, I failed to say that for convenience in the clerical section of the local post office, I put "c.g.h." as the sender, although you will of course understand that she knows nothing about the matter and therefore does not rate an acknowledgement.

And speaking of "c.g.h.", I was amused today when a package arrived from a jeweler's shop in Baton Rouge, the shipping label reading "To: Miss Annie Henry Garret". One more twist and they certainly would have had an omlette.

The package from Dora arrived today, too. It contained the leather cowboy boots he mentioned in his last letter. Peter and Earle chanced to be here, and I appealed to them for advice as to whom the things might be given. Mr. Brew said he wouldn't wear them enough about the house to pay for keeping them, and Peter said he wears a 10 shoe and these are 8 and a half. Finally they decided Wiley Anthony would be just the man for them, for he has a cowboy hat and has small feet, which certainly is a convenient combination in the present problem. And so to Wiley they will go, and he will probably find good use for them, for I think he hasn't been able to accumulate much since he returned from Federal prison last year, following a term served for having operated a still in the Little River area. It just occurs to me, too, that Wiley, - Dee-Dee Boy's bother, is forever riding a paint horse, a fact which along with the hat, makes the boots the perfect gift.

There was no dew at Arenbourg this morning, and so I am stirring the ground mightily to let xxx in any little trickles that may eventually drop from on high.....

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Tuesday, May 4th, 1948.

Memorandum: No letters from the outside world today; no newspapers, - only the Congressional Record, - a publication read by no one I ever heard of, so we were pretty much dependent on local doings for news and gossip.

To begin with, the elements did what they could to contribute their share of news. The rain for which I had been hoping, began dripping gently about 11:30 last night. By 3 a.m., it was pouring, to the accompaniment of a slight hail or hale as that phenomenon may be spelled. Lightning flashed madly for half an hour and the wind blew mightily for about three minutes. By 4 o'clock, everything was serene in the heavens, a tired moon "slanting slowly toward the West", a brilliant dawn just in the offing, and a fine day to follow.

I heard more about the elements around 5 a.m. It seems that it rained only through this section, not a drop falling in Natchitoches to the North or Cloutierville to the South. I also learned that the slight twister that breezed momentarily through our neighborhood blew several buildings from their foundations just down the river a way, where trees were torn up and cast into the River, fences and electric wires knocked every which way and a chicken coop transported slap across the river on to Hyman Cohen's plantation.

After supper tonight, J. H. drove the "adam and me" along the river to view the destruction. Several houses were all by sixes and sevens, and two or three were completely flattened, not one board remaining nailed to another. The home of Jean Baptiste Balthazar was all over the adjoining cotton field, while a rickety old corn crib standing hard by the house didn't lose one of his worn out shingles. The J. H. Balthazars have five children, and how this family of seven came through the blow unscathed, I haven't the vaguest notion. Perhaps they had the luck of the man somewhere further up the line who arose from his bed on hearing the big wind, and went to his kitchen door to see what was a-stir in the outside world. After opening the door, he stood on the threshold for a moment, and then turned

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to go inside again and close it, when, to his utter astonishment, he discovered that apparently when he opened the door and stepped onto the threshold, the entire house behind him and disappeared into thin air, with only the frame of the door and himself left behind.

But on Melrose and Arenbourg not a twig was out of order when I took to the open air about 4:30. Realizing it would be a good day to catch hold of a tractor, since the fields would be too wet to cultivate, I grab one early, and thus did a heap of mechanical weed destroying on our terrace. On the morrow, I shall tidy up the edges, leaving our floral friends to absorb all the water they please undisturbed.

Lacking a Society Section, what with no Times-Picayune, I made up for that, thanks to a half hour visit from Robert Anthony, who came up from Little River to see me. He confided to me that his sister, Doreatha had, quitted her husband, Ezra, that people said there was some disagreement about their car on Sunday night about 10, and that Ezra had started for his gun and shells whereupon Doreatha had started out the back door and had kept on traveling. I never breathed a word to Robert that Ezra had come to my house in great depression on Sunday night about 9 where for the next two hours he unburdened his soul and his troubles, explaining he hadn't seen Doreatha since early that morning. I am very fond of Ezra and Doreatha and their four children, and I am hoping they may solve their problems to the general welfare of all, but far be it from me to assist more than listening sympathetically. Robert, quite free from any confusion that might come from being able to read, and with a nice person, had obviously reached the same conclusion that I had a couple of days before. Often I have heard it said that negroes never discuss their family difficulties with white folks, - a fact, I take it, which may or may not be true, possibly depending in part on the possibility that some people feel like inclining a sympathetic ear while others may not have time.

I returned to Arenbourg at 1 o'clock where I found the nice damp soil just right to plant the fine root of the Trumpet vine which had come for us today from Wayside Gardens at Mentor, Ohio. This particular variety is sometimes referred to as "The College Bred Trumpet vine", as it has been developed into a really beautifully flowering vine from rather pretty but somewhat modest beginnings. The flowers are in the shape of morning glories, a lovely combination of brick red and chrome yellow, and there are usually from five to ten in each cluster. For lack of better place, I planted it to run up on the old residence, where eventually, when the latter is replaced by the maison de la reine, it may be transplanted to a permanent situation. Thus we jog along and the steps, I know, are in the right direction.....

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Wednesday, May 5th, 1948.

Memorandum;

The humidity and heat continue high, with everything growing madly at Arenbourg.

A fine morning mist drenched everything abroad at dawn this mornig, - including good old Dora and me, as we headed up the road.

I chopped down about a half an acre of weeds, taller than I, but my progress was slow, for big old lilies were concealed in the dense growth, so I broke no records at speed.

Yesterday, on returning from Arenbourg, Senator Fredericks stopped to pick me up, in spite of my drenched condition. He has recently been appointed Governor Long's Executive Secretary, - a miserable job, according to J. H., who declares the sole requirement is to be nice to every one who is trying to see the Governor and can't, and a task involved that requires the Secretary to lie by saying "Yes" to every appeal for patronage. Perhaps that's why the Senator stopped to pick me up, feeling quite sure he would thus encounter one person during the day who wouldn't ask for something that it was impossible for him to grant.

An hour before supper tonight, Dan came to the upper sitting room where the Madam and I were chatting. He told her that J. H. had just given a hundred dollars of their money to buy buttermilk to be served at the Baton Rouge inauguration, which is next Tuesday. He laughingly suggested the Madam complain to J. H. about her giving away her money to Earle Jones Long when she had so ardently voted for Sam Jones.

The gest went over at supper better than anyone had anticipated, for instead of berating J. H. about the actual sum, she spoke about the thousand dollars worth of buttermilk he had purchased for his friend, which opened the way for lots of hilarity.

I think I mentioned before that Dan played on the Sam Jones side in the recent elections while J. H. - silently but definitely, ranged himself on the Long side, so that the Henrys were bound to win, no matter which way the electorate decided. I think the hundred dollar

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buttermilk donation has a new road to Little River, to be built by the State, across Melrose, thus making it pretty close to a private road, - but not quite. So things weave and spin in this area.

During the 1948 Presidential campaign, we shall often hear the trumpet blow in glorification of State's rights. Since the advent of Mr. Roosevelt, the Federal Government, of course, has eliminated a lot of those old imaginary barriers. And I must say that when I contemplate the hocus-pokus business that goes on among State politicians, and the fairly honest operation of Government in projects originating for State benefits in Washington, I must say I think further elimination of States' rights would in the end be better for the average citizen.

One more rumor on the home front: - it is said the General's son will be married in Germany in June or July, with the grooms' parents probably attending. It is said that the groom's mother, in spite of her disapproval of the prospective bride who isn't rich enough to suit her, will present the newly weds with a \$1,50.00 silver tea service. If they can only save some of the buttermilk to go with it.....

I have just accomplished the somewhat extraordinary feat of reading a book whose title and whose author are still unknown to me. The title sounded like "Hotel Bemlemann" while the author's name sounded like Ludwig Bemlemann, but I wouldn't know for certain. Anyway it was a light but entertaining memoir of a man from Regensburg on the Danube, who gives an account of hotel experiences in New York at "Hotel Splendide", which, obviously, is the pseudonym for the Ritz. I move on to William James' "Will To Believe" and other philosophical speculations, enjoying them the more for the Bemlemann interlude.

I have thought much recently about what we want to use as a semi-circular backdrop for the elephant traps, and were you within reach, I would bore you endlessly by discussing the relative virtues of Chinese magnolias (tree variety) or wax leaf ligustrum or sweet olives, all of which have their advantages and disadvantages. I must begin giving newt "inter's planting some serious thought. I might have this machine repaired in the meantime, too, I guess.

Well, Celeste brought little Miss A. down from town at first dark tonight, long after the Madam had folded up. As the fireflies were beginning to set their lamps alight in the big oak, we, - little Miss A., and I, - sat on the gallery of the big house, chatting a little, but I learned nothing of especial interest. Perhaps I shall be luckier on the morrow.....

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Thursday, May 6th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Knipmayer Day again, but I never got a passing glance at the parish physician, for at 10 o'clock, when he usually passes this way, I skipped up the road for the third time since dawn, to get in a few extra licks at the Johnson grass, perfect for digging, thanks to another elegant shower between 1 and 3 o'clock this morning.

But missing one medico made possible the meeting of another which interested me no end. Jacke Marcel who lives in a little isolated cabin between here and the spillway, observed me spading from the Bermuda Road, and stopped to chat. Jacke Marcel may have figured in these pages before, - I can't recall. He is black-black, perhaps 55 years old, has never changed his clothes within the memory of man, seldom works much in the field but is always fishing or hunting and puzzling people as to how he keeps alive and how his wife survives, the latter being a poor blind creature, shut up in their cabin, crazy as a loon, a classic perplexity as to how human beings sometimes just can't die. Few people on the place have been inside Jack's cabin in recent years. The ladies of the colored Baptist congregation, used to visit the cabin in former years, - at least twice a year, and armed with hoes, brooms and buckets, would clean the place out as best they could, bath and dress Lizzie, Jack's wife, and rush home to delouse themselves. But in recent years, Jack, resenting such visits, persuaded his wife the church ladies really weren't interested in her welfare, but were merely using her as a pretext to get into the house to seduce her husband, and in consequence, the poor thing went deeper into her confused mental state, - and the ladies could come no more.

But in spite of his malodorous atmosphere, Jack has a kindly disposition and somehow enjoys a reputation for success as a witch doctor. When Lemite's wife, "Cousin Lug" stepped on a moccasin while barefooted a year or two ago, she immediately hot-footed it to Jack who passed a piece of silver over the bite, and "Cousin Lug" was cured within a day.

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And so, as Jack leaned on the fence and I continued to dig, we fell to talking about the local health situation, and you may readily picture my surprise when he told me that the night before Aurellia and Bessie had brought the baby to him for professional treatment. I slid over the matter casually, but could scarcely wait until I could ask Aurellia about it.

Later, back at Melrose, I asked her about it. She assured me that Jack is really a wonderful doctor. The present case is a fine example, she declared. It seems the baby is teething and frets and cries all the time. About midnight, on Tuesday, she and Bessie decided something ought to be done about it, - the child had also been constipated for four days, - and so they took the child to Jack at midnight. The latter held the poor little thing in his filthy arms for a few moments, passed his finger across its gums, and the squalling bundle somehow shuddered and relaxed and immediately fell asleep. The girls, of course, were enchanted, and flying home with their precious cargo, tucked it in bed where it slept for 12 hours without awakening.

Rasputin's power has sometimes been attributed to hypnotism, I believe, and perhaps "Dr." Jack's success in some instances might be explained in the same fashion. Even now I gasp whenever I think of anyone putting their baby in that dirty quack's hands, and yet the baby did get some sleep which may have been one thing it needed, and probably will not die from its contact. Naturally, if I had the lady doctor's Mississippi address, I should enjoy sending her a note, illustrative of what goes on in the Cane River country when there are no real physicians within reach of the poor, while charlatans flourish with success to themselves, - and possibly to their patients among the simple and the untutored.

By noon today, a brilliant sun had dissipated the morning dews and damps, making it possible for little Miss A. to set up her easel under the big oak and so entangle herself with paint brushes and her lorgnette, which is certainly a curious spectacle. She is the only person I ever saw who paints with the aid and entanglement of such an instrument, - but then, there is only one little Miss A. in the world.

So many things to talk about and so many interesting personalities passing this way today, but here I have accomplished nothing and already must fold....

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Friday, May 7th 1948.

Memorandum:

What a haircut, - what a billiard ball. - And I don't mean by the artistry of Beau Mack, tractor driver.

What I mean, - figuratively, - is that with her Marly shears, Salome done snipped off all Samson's perriquet. Stamina, Fortitude, Character, - all and sundry virtues that any man might lay claim to went flying out the window in one single swish.

For today arrived your lovely air mail letter of Wednesday, and it rested on this machine until first dark. In the mean time, safely locked away in my armoire was a neat package which had come by Registered or Insured post. I had in mind it might be intended for a May 9th opening, and there I intended it would remain until Sunday. But all those concepts were rampant only until my Ethiopian arrived and I had read your letter. Frankly, your reference to probably contents of the package was too much for me, and accordingly, as soon as Mr. Brew had departed, I lost no time at all in flitting a couple of leaves from my calendar, anticipating 48 hours in two seconds, and Lo! - - and this must sound perfectly incredible to you, knowing me so well, - I find myself speechless.

Five minutes later, Fate contrived to make my happiness complete, for a tapping sounded on my chamber door. It was Mr. Brew who had forgotten his hat. There were Arenbourg roses on a lovely card, whose printed and hand written words he assisted me with, and some little slips of paper indicating details, already half anticipated, but doubly joyous in their confirming message. Again and again have I turned the card over in my hands, again and again have I glanced at the splendid photographs taken in Washington. On one side of my typewriter, resting on the leather stationary desk accoutrement, - a gift of years ago, rests the exquisitely burnished little tray, the handiwork of Lydia Lee herself, and a souvenir of Penland and a reminder of Ashville. On the other side of my typewriter stands forth the single word, "Marly" all shimmering under its cellophane covering. After all, and in view of all these happinesses, is it any wonder I find myself poverty stricken for words.

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I can readily imagine your astonishment when quite unprepared you one day discovered Marly looking straight at you out of the window of La Maison Francaise. You can equally imagine how thunderstruck was I when I learned from your letter that Editions Tel had brought out such an item. Like you, I, too, regret only that circumstances at the moment do not permit us to share all the lovely pictures together, and an equally thrilling chance to compare and contrast the elegant maps and detailed drawings, as depicted in this lovely folio as an inspiration to those inimitable schmirkers that come from my pencil on occasion.

And how nice of you to save until this time the good news that after all these years, the restoration work is going ahead on the park. How often have I thought of one ideal day I should like to spend in Ile de France with Lydia Lee, - I make a little game of it, thinking how that day would be spent, if but one were allowed. About the best program I have ever been able to concoct follows this schedule: - early-early breakfast at Versailles; the morning at les Trianons, the afternoon at the Hameau, sunset on the Grande Terrasse of the big Chateau, supper on the Terrace at St. Germain-en-Lay, and an evening, heavily gilded with moonlight in the Park of Marly. Well, if this meets with your approval, I at least have been supplied with adequate maps and data to acquaint myself with the evening program.

And while it may seem curious to you, still it is a truth I might as well confess, even though there may be little or no sense to it; - Marly means ever so much more to me, following your visit to Charlottesville last autumn. For somehow I feel the Sage of Monticello captured a little of the spirit of Marly when he laid out his pet University, and even though it be pitifully small as compared to the grand scale of the original, still I feel it has something of its classic nobility, and because you have seen and felt it in substance and in our exchange of thoughts on the matter, the two properties somehow merge into one, even as do hearts when they are perfectly attuned. Gardening, Mozart, Lydia Lee and Marly and the University of Virginia and M.... but I need scarcely keep up the enumeration, for I know perfectly well you have the same feeling as I, and when feelings are so acute, words are utterly redundant.

And tonight is Friday, and you face a fairly free week end. I'm so glad for you and for L. J., and if it turns out half as happy as my week end has already been guaranteed, then its going to be simply grand.....thanks to you.....

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Sunday, May 9th, 1948.

It has been a lovely day on Cane River. So often during the day have I hoped it has been equally so in the lower Hudson Valley. My thoughts have turned in that direction so often.

At 4:30 when I arose, I found myself wondering what time it might be off yonder, being undertain what "daylight saving" does to the time zones, but hoping the while you might be fast asleep with a day full of relaxation both for you and for the girl friend.

Good old Dora was sleeping on my doorstep as I stepped out of the house at 4:40, a glistening while folio under my arm and a fresh pack of kools in my pocket.

To Arenbourg we marched, everything deliciously cool and quiet. Parking the folio on a bench, I turned my attention to Arbor Day festivities, for yesterday afternoon I had parked five elegant Grandifloras on the gallery of the old house, in anticipation of a happy dawn. Dirt flew madly in the circle separating Units No. 2 and 3, and along the serpentine plot running down toward Uncle d'Or's. The earth, damp from the past week's rains, was deliciously pungent, and by 5:30 all our little friends were well "sot" in their new locations, and refreshingly watered from the silvery water just below the terrace. Thus the investment from afar, plus the preparations at hand made it possible to get them permanently settled in their new home where, let us hope, they will thrive mightily for a hundred and fifty years hence.

My old friend, the Mocking Bird, ever a curious fellow, was forever just one jump ahead of my spade, - and except for a couple of Baltimore Orioles, busy in the big old cottonwood on the bank, we had no visitors or observers.

The actual planting completed, the Mocking Bird continued to fuss about the newly turned earth, and when I bent over the margin of the river to wash my hands before taking up my folio, a Cardinal, as in benediction, sang for the sheer joy of

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oving on the little black locust tree just above my head.
Is it any wonder my thoughts were flashing back and forth
from there to here and here to there.

From 5:30 until 6:30, I sat on the bench,
my back resting against the gallery of the old house,
turning through the Washington photographs and
Marly, inhaling the delicious mixture of menthol
and sweet morning air, and revelling in the collection
of photos and illustrations that somehow went so
nicely as a kind of blessed relaxation after the
more strenuous beginnings of the day. We shall
eventually consider the same Grandifloras and the
same folio from the same situation, yes, no.

Back home and a hot bath, and Aurellia brought
me my breakfast tray. It seems Celeste's cook had
learned that today was my birthday, and she had
passed the gossip along to Aurellia. That accounted
for the rose, and also for Aurellia's recommendation
that I "smell of it good". I smelled, and discovered
she had somehow tightly rolled up a dollar bill and
inserted it among the center petals. Poor, poverty-
stricken Aurellia, on 8 dollars a week, with herself
and Mama and Bessie and the baby to support. And
I thought the whole thing quite touching, and so we
came to an agreement, - after "many myrations" on my
part, - that I should keep the rose and press it
in one of my big books, and Aurellia would keep the
dollar for me in the tin box she has concealed for her
little savings behind a volume in the bookshelves in
my living room. And so we were all happy, and I
had to get on with my breakfast and with Beau Mack
who had come to cut my hair, and Mr. Brew who had come
to borrow some Absorbine, Jr., for his Athlete's Foot,
and so on and so forth.

Dinner at Celeste's was altogether pleasant.
I sat on Celeste's right and had little Miss A. on my
right, so we were light and gay at our end of the
table, and it sounded as though everything went
along nicely around the remainder of the board.

During the afternoon, Bluff worked on the Grandfather's
clock in my bedroom while I entertained Dr. Rand in the
adjoining chamber. He passed this way to invited me
to a little party at the camp along about sundown, but
I declined. We dropped by the big house as he
was leaving. Little Miss A. was sittin with
the Madam, but flew out as soon as I presented Dr.
Rand. It seems she had just stuck her finger in the
big floor fan, and was siezed with the fear a
physician might want to patch it up for her -
a devotee of the Boston Mrs. Eddy.

And may your day have been happy, too.....

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Bachelor 7/8/48
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May 11th, 1948.
Memorandum:

Tuesday, cloudy and humid, with an occasional
gleam of sunshine and an infrequent sprinkle, just
so as to give everything a sub-tropical impulse to
vegetate.

I slept but indifferently last night, having
picked up a tick in my yesterday's labors. I was astir
therefor by 4 o'clock, but didn't head up the road until
4:30, and on my return, thanks to a hot soapy bath on top of
Vaseline treatment of an over-night span, I washed
away both dirt and tick. And speaking of the tendency
toward prostration these days, I am reminded that
yesterday, one returning from Arenbourg somewhat dampened
by excessive diligence, Mattie, the cook, took one look
at me, remarking: "Lordy, but you sure's been a-workin",
'cause you sure is a-sweatin' under the eyes".

And so, no matter what transpires, now that
summer is approaching your neighborhood, please don't
put yourself through to that extent.

I was delighted to get to Dr. Mercer's letter today,
and, like you, found it quite charming. I think Dr.
Butler may be able to set us straight as to the precise year
it was penned, but it is obvious that it had its origin
during the depression that came in 1837 and lasted for
a number of years. During that period there were an
unusually large number of marine disasters as well as
financial collapses on every side, and I think that
is what accounts for his reference in the latter part of
the letter, wherein he apparently is speaking of Mrs.
Lomax's beginnings with her private school in Washington.
Vaguely there is a familiar ring to some of the Mercer
phrases. Perhaps these are along parallel lines to others
in his correspondence, or perhaps some mention was made
in a footnote in the "Pages From a Washington Diary".

It has been said by authorities, - although I never investigate
the point myself, that practically every piece of property in
Adams County changed hands, - temporarily at least, - during
the 1837 panic under the Andrew Jackson regime. It
would appear from this letter that Dr. Mercer must have

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been an exception, and I gather from his calm lines that he felt himself quite secure in spite of the crashes going on all over the country. It is interesting that he was able to ride out this 1837 panic so successfully, and repeat the performance during the lean "reconstruction Years of the late 1860's and early 1870's, so that, in his 1873 will, he could dispose of a flock of plantations and other fat properties, not to mention the five million he left the Butlers.

As all of Dr. Mercer's private correspondence, his journals, diaries, etc., are still at Laurel Hill, there is no doubt a number of letters from Mrs. Lomax, undoubtedly the one to which Dr. Mercer's letter is the response. Isn't it regrettable, - and just a little maddening, that no one will probably ever be permitted to see these, merely because none of the Butler can imagine how anyone should be genuinely interested, save for some ulterior purpose, - and at the same time, being so brainy, none of the present occupants of Laurel Hill would turn a finger to even glance through any of this vast treasure house of ante-bellum lore.

But then there is the case of Mr. Bachelier and his ante bellum account books, etc., and come to think of it both Bachelier and Butler somehow start off on the same letter.

I read a little from William James last night. In an article on "The Environment of Man of Genius", or some such title, he made an interesting speculation. He remarked upon the exceeding development of cultural manifestations in the Mediterranean basin, the richness of the Arts, Letters and Learning in Carthage, Spain, France, Italy and Sicily from 400 B. C. down for a couple of thousand years, and yet how remarkable it was that Sardinia and Corsica, slap in the midst of all this flowering, never seemed to produce anything at all that blossomed so abundantly all around them. He didn't attempt a solution to this mystery, which might be impossible anyway, but I did find the question an interesting one.

I continue to turn through my Washington photographs and the early folio, loving them all with each new turning. The Washington photos are so nice and big I can make them out readily enough, while with the aid of a reading glass, I can easily detect the finer points in the Marly editions and details. I'm so glad Editions Tel made this most perfect of 17th century gardens in book rather than plate form. As additional titles come to your attention, you will satisfy my curiosity in passing along what other contributions they are making to civilization. I know not why, but I always assumed they would do an interior set of illustrations from Versailles, - perhaps because of the single star on the first folio, which I have. - Oh, dear, - so many things to talk about and here we are all run out already. But tomorrow is another day, yes, no.....

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Wednesday, May 12th, 1948.

Memorandum;

Conditions continue ideal for all green growing things at Arenbourg. The heat is considerable but the direct glare of the sun is tempered by thin veils of clouds. From below steams up the moisture which came down so gently but abundantly during the past week. The net result is that our new little magnolias appear as thriving as bouncing babes in a Daffoe contrived nursery, while the new growth on the pears exceeds the rigid strength of their bases to keep them upright, their general appearance somehow suggesting a gangling girl or boy of the teen age whose poise hasn't quite caught up with his height and years. Even the weeds aren't doing badly.

One thing I especially like about the country is the opportunity it affords one to revel in the words of the psalms: "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth His handiwork", - observations so often denied the city dweller whose vision in such directions are so frequently blinded by the glare of myriad electric lights. Last night, as I folded your letter, I chanced to glance out of the window, giving on the White Garden, and there in the North Western sky hung a deliciously liquid new moon. Somehow in large cities, one never gets much of an opportunity to observe the changing courses of the planets and satellites but in the country, where skylines change so slightly with the passing of the seasons, and the heavenly bodies appear so much more intimate, one more readily keeps pace with such things. Living in a house facing directly South, I always think of the moon glistening on the banana leaves along the front gallery, the moon forever seemingly in a "ratherly" situation, and so, when she quite unexpectedly starts appearing in at my gallery on the North side of the house, I am both surprised and enchanted, - and withal delighted at my opportunity to observe these astral phenomena which would scarcely come my way in town.

I had had in mind to fold up on ending my little chat with you but the sight of the moon enticed me abroad, and so, for purely sentimental reasons, I took a little turn in the open, finding it sweet and good to sit for a half hour on the terrace at Arenbourg, my soul filled with the regiving and wonder.

1883

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Back home, I felt not at all sleepy, and so I sat myself down at my typewriter and dashed off a few pages of Forward for Dr. Rand's Golden Book which he will keep at his Camp for passing visitors to inscribe their thoughts and names in. I can't imagine why, but I entitled the thing, "Preface to Pleasure", although it is merely a sketch of the "atchitoches country which Dr. Rand would like to have bound at the beginning of the volume. It's a rough sketch, but, with you in mind, I put in a carbon as I started, and when the thing is finished, I shall send it along, - the duplicate, - even though much of it will probably be old stuff.

What with my nocturnal visit to Arenbourg and my thumping of this machine until after the moon was down, I overslept this morning, not awakening until nearly five o'clock, and perhaps would not have done so then, had not a youth from "little

River tapped on my door. He had come out to Melrose to hoe cotton, but thought he would pass this way before beginning his day's labors, in order to tell me what had happened to his uncle early last evening. Several of the men and boys about sundown had decided to do some seining. A net was accordingly strung across Little River, held by several of the fisher folk while two or three of the more hardy men waded down stream, thus impelling the fish in the direction of the net. For the most part a shallow stream, "little river in some places if almost up to a man's neck, requiring a degree of courage or fool-hardiness, - as the case may be, for one to proceed bare footed and bare legged in a water course so teeming with piscatorial prizes and reptilian terrors. As the waders were approaching the end of their drive, one of the men suddenly gave a cry, and a second later disappeared under water. A couple men in a little flat boat grabbed at him as the back of his head came to the surface a moment later. They tugged hard to get him into the boat, but the unusual weight he seemed to carry, lightened only as he was nearly out of the water. At that moment, the men in the boat noticed a big old turtle, perhaps three feet across, which had caught the man by his middle toe, as he had walked upon the bed of the river. As the man was being hauled into the boat, the turtle gave one big twist, taking the man's toe slap off, and disappearing beneath the dark surface of the water.

They cranked up an old Ford immediately and rushed the man to the "atchitoches where his foot was sewed up, and save for a considerable shock, he was taken back home, - comparatively fortunate.

Lord, Lord! And I had so many things I wanted to talk about but tomorrow we can proceed and continue on....

Charles A.

7/1/48

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Thursday, May 13th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Today's atmospheric pattern duplicated yesterday's, - hot and humid, designed but completely for our little flowering friends at Arenbourg.

Come to think of it, Dr. Knipmayer remarked this morning how fine the mimosas were looking, - all four. Save for stirring up the soil around them, I try not to worry them too much, allowing nature to take full charge of that department, with no interference on my part to discourage them from slowing up in the slightest.

In today's post came the enclosed letter from Charles which speaks for itself. Possessed, as he is, with a keen sense of humor and a heap of good sense, his need for cranking up the telephone, on his return trip from Alexandria to Baton Rouge, to persuade his practitioner to work on the state of his health, fills me with puzzlement. As I remarked to little Miss Alberta once, recommending aspirin for a headache, it seems to me God must have given us that commodity so we could leave Him alone, what with all He has on His mind, and so avoid getting the whole planetary system gummed up while we take up His time complaining over a passing pain we may have in the neck.

The Knipmayers didn't have much news. I could have told them something about the lady doctor, but I didn't. My cane "river grapevine, - Celeste through Magnolia, reports that Dr. Eleanor will be in Jackson, Miss., for one month, after which she will take up her new position with the State Health Department at its Gulf Port center. I had hoped she might be stationed in Natchez, at least, - or better still, in Greenville, hard by Memphis, across the State line. For Gulf Port is next to Biloxi, and Biloxi is but 60 miles from New Orleans, - and her highly active husband, the Paul Veiths, etc., - and I have a feeling that the proximity of Gulf Port to the Crescent City will not serve so completely in the recuperative stages as would some more remote situation.

Today I heard for the first time of anyone making serious preparations as against the crash of atom bombs. Little Miss Alberta tells me that her wealthy friend, Mrs. Lemon, of New Orleans, is buying a lot in Donaldsonville, La., where

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she will build a refuge in anticipation of New Orleans being marked for atomic destruction. I think Donaldsonville is about 50 miles up the Mississippi from New Orleans. It seems to me, were Madam Lemon not quite such a curious piece of fruit, she would select ~~xxix~~ slightly more remote locality, and one which was not below the level of the surrounding levees. But perhaps the preparedness lady is in the same category as the one, once visiting Melrose, who solemnly declared to everyone's perplexity:

"You know, the longer I live, the longer I live"

What with gardening, pilgrimage and the like, I'm not doing much reading, but I did take time out to digest a couple of Essays by Francis Bacon, and I liked them. In one of them, he mentioned the word "business", - a fact which excited my curiosity as to the coinage of that word and the length of time it has been in use. Mr. Bacon published this particular Essay in 1612, and I would have supposed that the word never made its bow prior to the inception of the 19th century, - at the earliest. If it turns out that the word appears in the Bible, I'll just play I didn't say anything.

Celeste had quite a gay party this afternoon, with a supper afterwards and some quite charming people were invited, I believe. She asked me to pass by, but I declined, having no time today for such contacts as would rob me of doings at Arenbourg. I should have been glad to chat for a little with Mrs. Aswell, for the latest particulars in the realms of Art and Politics, but she will be down this way one of these days, and I shall be able to get her ear behind a rose bush, and so not have to buck the chatter of a dozen bags, all intent on not thumping their partner's ace, or whatever one isn't supposed to do at bridge games.

Little Miss A. continues with the determination of a bigot in her attempts, - an annual affair, - to teach Aurellia to read. I wish she would stop. After all, Aurellia was born, fully endowed with the meaning of such words as "Charity", "Fidelity", "Honesty" and so on and for 30 odd years has exemplified them while too many of her associates preen their feathers in knowing the letters, unmindful of the fact that they will probably never know or practice the spirit of the virtues these words stand for. And I found it both pitiful and hilarious today when poor Aurellia, after a prolonged sitting with little Miss A., proudly marched to my house to announce the success of her day's labors. "I can spell cat," she proudly announced: - "C-a-t". "And I can spell Dog, too. H-a-t".

Alright, Aurellia.....

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Friday, May 14th, 1948.

Memorandum:

The marvelous growing weather continues, with heavy dews by night and bright sunshine by day. I reckon the mimosas may not get out of hand this year, but with the splendid development of this year, they might swing out in any old direction next year.

Today's radio spoke of Senator Overton's death in Washington last night. If he had only decided on his departure on Monday night, Mr. Long's inaugural would have been thrown into an uproar, I suppose, for that would have given Governor Davis an opportunity to appoint Mr. Long's political adversary to the vacant Senator's seat, - a circumstance that would have put the Baton Rouge festivities on to the second page.

I tried to talk with Mrs. Rand this morning but could never get a call through to Alexandria. I suppose all the overtons, kin and acquaintances, were bogging down the wires. I guess the Rands have known them for years, and their daughter's husband, "Hitfield" Jack, is some relation of the Senator.

Little Miss Alberta had a letter from Myle's Aunt Maude today. The letter, posted in Baton Rouge on Wednesday, had been directed to New Orleans and then had been forwarded. It told that Aunt Maude's sister, Aunt Lizzie Chambers, was undergoing an operation on Thursday, - something about the bladder, hemorrhages, etc. As she is 85, I imagine her case will not be an easy one.

Dr. and Mrs. Cook called this afternoon. Master-craftsmen as they are at invariably dropping in at the wrong time, they made it in about an hour before supper and remained for about an hour afterward, - without an invitation to dine. Miss Alberta had not met them before. Mrs. Cook, approaching the Statue of Liberty in stature, indulges more and more, as over big ladies seem inclined, to talk baby talk, and so I wasn't surprised to hear her announce in a mincing voice that "Daddy spent Christmas with the Baby who had a real Christmas tree of his own". To which, quite naturally, little Miss A. inquired as to the age of the Baby, and I laughed in my

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beard when the proud mother responded that "he is 20 and graduates from Harvard next year".

Fascinating conversation, don't you think.

While I think of it, let me mention that today's post brought me another 59th Street transfer from Life, - apparently the same thing which I submitted to your inspection. I took it to "A.", who got out his correspondence with the publishers regarding the two year subscription. He immediately wrote them again while I was present. He says he hasn't given up hope, for at long last Paynie's seems to have started up quite unexpectedly, although his own subscription is in the same condition as mine up to the moment.

He expressed amazement at the fact that an organization like Life should handle their business so badly, but remarked that last week he had a letter from Equitable Life Insurance, advising him that his loan was over due, etc. Being unaware that he had any outstanding loans from that company, he made inquiry and learned that the letter should have gone to the individual whose case was filed next to his. I sometimes think that little companies make more mistakes than big ones, but when a huge concern, like Life, makes up its mind to get out of whack, it really heads out on a bender.

I think we shall have no blossoms on our two surviving gardenias at Arenbourg. It is pleasant to report, however, that the fresh little leaves are coming out in abundance on our sole two bushes, - and of course their survival convinces me that they will live forever, and probably bloom madly next year. Today the first blossoms unfolded on the Melrose gardenias, being not quite so late as I had expected, for usually May 8th is the day they usually make their first annual bow. I have both of them here on my desk before me and I need not add they smell mighty pretty.

One lady and one youth, - hoe hands, fell out in the field today. Bertha Bluff and Buck were the victims, but as I recall, both of them fell out once or twice last year, and I'm wondering if in their particular cases it may not be due to epilepsy, which Bertha Bluff used to have a few years ago. I'm glad the Melrose Social Club is so near Arenbourg so if I have a fit while hoeing they can rush over a can of beer and anoint me, - a treatment that really ought to perform wonders.

The enclosure from Caroline to the Madam isn't especially entertaining, but it does show her following the usual theme of never hearing from the Madam. I can't imagine what plants she is putting to bed for the summer, for she is planting the Wild Flower Garden for Mrs. Stearn, and since bulb are the only things that go to sleep in the summer, and bulbs are not wild flowers, I am at a loss to picture what she is up to, - and best of all, I really don't care.....

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Dora 7/15
R.D. 7/14/48
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May 16th, (Sunday), 1948.

Memorandum:

The beginning of this report might well be entitled: "A study in black and white".

Little Miss Alberta (white) left Melrose for New Orleans abruptly this noon. Maybelle (colored) is expected to leave Melrose for Alexandria tonight.

Maybelle's case arises from a duplication of last Saturday's snufflings. As on May 8th, so on May 15th, Maybelle and Peter both got high, and ended up by fist-a-cuffing, wherein Peter tore off most of Maybelle's clothes while in the big road. Among other doings, Maybelle broke into her sister's cabin, - her sister being Mattie, the cook, and donned her new "uniform", - which Peter proceeded to tear off. All night, on returning to their own cabin, Peter and Maybelle kept the racket a-going, producing a series of "Can't res--a-night" cases in their neighborhood. This morning, furious and red as a turkey, J. H. sent for Maybelle, telling her she would have to move off the place forthwith. Within half an hour, - if he follows his usual course, J. H. will be roaring at such "nigger doings", and the same old pattern in the cabins will be starting all over again.

On the white side of the picture appears little Miss A. Last night J. H. brought her a telephone message from New Orleans, wherein she was asked to return immediately to oust a tenant from one of her apartments. It seems a G. I. and his wife, occupying the slave quarters in the old Myra Clark Gains court-yard, went on a drunken bat, to ring up the apartment and making the night hideous for the neighborhood. In the Peter-Maybelle scuffle it is blandly called "pure D nigger business", but I know not how it is styled by neighbors of 823 Royal when the participant are of the superior race.

Could it have been Cicero who remarked: "Oh Times, Oh Manners".

Well, anyway, that was Saturday night on the banks of Cane River.

Of the enclosures, they speak for themselves. The Melrose coffee seems to have pleased Robina, and she, in turn, has supplied me with the address of a pilgrim who when visiting here a week ago, spoke of a pink magnolia grandiflora, more particulars of which I want to find out. In Dor's case, I seem to have pulled a D. Miller in failing to acknowledge.

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receipt of the cowboy boots which I think I mentioned to you on their arrival. And while on the Miller matter of the candy at Christmas time, did I ever mention that inside the wrapping, when I got around to undo the package, was a lovely Christmas card, with the handwritten inscription: "Much love to Aunt Janet", which naturally gave added zest to both the gift and the subsequent correspondence, via Robina, regarding the matter.

As for the post card, it would seem that little Miss Ramsey may honor us this week. I reckon she merely plans a stop-over with a view to determining a date when we can start in on the Cane River business, and a longer range consideration of the St. Francisville garveyard business. In the mean time, I continue with my sketch of the the Cane River, so that it may be in fair shape, so far as a first rough draft goes, when the photographs start coming into focus.

This afternoon, Mrs. Rand dropped in for a couple of hours, bringing with her a suit box crammed full of gardenias. I have them in a big old flat silver bowl here on my desk, and they go ever so nicely with Francis Bacon's Essay on Gardening, which I shall re-read before folding up my beard. In running over the Essay last night, I smiled to myself, what with Arenbourg as a back drop, when I got to the part where Mr. Bacon remarks that one so frequently sees fine palaces built before the Prince gives any thought to gardening, so that one (Mr B.) may justly conclude that the Art of Gardening must be a refinement over the Art of Building. That might be one way of explaining and spreading solace to one's soul that the Maison de la Reine yet remains to have its corner stone laid at Arenbourg, yes, no.

And gardening impells me to mention again how much I treasure my photos from Washington and my early folio. I put them under my xxx ma arm and marched myself to Arenbourg at sundown. It was so pleasant, strolling there in the nice cool breeze from the river, turning through them again and again, glancing southward to the purple hills below Montrose, the purpler because of the heavy cigarette smoke which I exhaled from time to time. I do not bring my Pennland ashtray with me, for it is too beautiful for other than ornamentation on my desk at home, but the thought of all the delights you assembled for my natal day constantly fills my heart with extesy. On entering the place I looked at nothing at all, save a side glance at the mimosa which seem as sturdy as can be. A little before dawn tomorrow I must get moving in the same direction, this time armed with a spade and not my folio. It will be different but equally satisfying, -- as the spalmist has it: "when duty is pleasure, and pleasure is joy, how sweet is the leisure of endless employ".....

But I must bring this to a close for the moon is peaking in my north window at me and I know it is time to fold. It has been a nice day, primarily as are all days, because at their close there is always the promise of a little chat with you.....

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Miss Nellie 7/9/50

May 17th, - Monday, 1948.

Memorandum:

How nice to have your letter in this morning's post.

My secretary had a couple of extra hours off and I looked forward to absorbing it leisurely, when Lo! after the second paragraph, the plantation had urgent need of him, and so I have the anticipation of trasuring the first two paragraphs until tomorrow noon when we shall "resume and continue on".

In the same post came the enclosed letter from Miss Nellie. Ezra passed by this evening and I sked him to read it to me, but I preferred to retain yours until Mr. Brew could pass this way on the morrow, - I am so accustomed to him for purely confidential communications, - or rather I should say personal letters, for while Ezra is as good as gold, Mr. Brew somehow tosses off personal communications in a fashion which leaves tam all to me and none for anyone else, including himself.

Poor Miss Nellie. Obviously Jefferson College's fate, the prospect of having to find a new home on her return from Atlanta in the autumn, somehow seem to depress her. And the worst of it is that she assigns too much merit to my memory of her addresses in Vicksburg and Atlanta. I never knew the former and the latter escapes me completely. It is 14 something or other East or North Morningside Drive, and I should ever so much like to drop her the sweet note she deserves, but my hands appear tied momentarily, - and I gather from her letter she has already quite Natchez. Well, I'll find the way through somehow.

Surely the Gods were vexed with themselves and the world over the week end, for local gossip continues to bring in reports of bad acting and accidents all around the river. Napoleon Bonapart Carter, Jr., smashed his car and broke his arm. The twins, - Little King and Big Six had some kind of a scuffle over the former's 1935 Ford. Little King wanted it to go courting while Big Six wanted it by way of supplying entertainment for his girl friend visiting him over the week end, - a Winfield lassie, I believe, and some kind to my secretary, since her name is Brew and she hails from these parts. The up-shot of the twin's disagreement was a free for all, following which Little King pitched a brick through the window as Big Six was driving off.

With the Napoleon Bonapartes and the King Solomons setting the pace, - and what might power and wisdom those names summon up, a half dozen like "miseres" might be enumerated in the colored and white sections of the local populations.

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And yet another dawn broke this morning, glorious as all have been during the past week, an half an hour after I had arrived at Arenbourg; the muffled sound of distant tractors came floating along the Bermuda Road, as half a hundred dusky tillers of the soil, some starting their tractors, some brandishing their hoes, and a tempestuous week end was finished and a new week begun.

Picking up where little Miss Alberta left off, my patient decided to teach Aurellia her A B Cs, but patient does not necessarily imply patience, and Aurellia was in tears and her teacher in a lather before the afternoon had closed. Later I saw Aurellia in the road, as plump as a barrel, what with some revolting new pale blue slacks she had on donned after leaving her duties at the big house, - and withal as gay as a bird. But the transformation could not be painted so rosey for the "adam who lost her sense of balance on the way to the side gate just after supper when Pan was to take us for a ride. I held her up bodily, easing her to a garden bench, and after a brief rest and some water, she made it to the car alright, but obviously exhausted.

On the way down the Montrose Lane, we met J. A. heading toward Melrose, driving a fine new Cadillac, a make of car that somehow seems ill suited to his favorite line of "us poor folks". And as we continued our ride, he in one direction, we in another, the thought of the elegant stakes we have been having at dinner and supper for three months on end, came to my mind, - and of the succeeding three months of fried chicken for dinner and supper, for 90 days at a stretch, with never a stake nor a chicken tossed into the middle of the spread as a suggestion of variation, and I thought of the week end with all its hurly-burly and the start of the new week with all its topsy-turvy, and naturally asked myself if an unfailing sign of softening of the brain arrives when one reaches the point he thinks something's wrong with all the world as it swirls about him.

But then, from a Fragonard wood, a-drip with Spanish moss, and dark with shadow passed rapidly by, and from the black pool beneath the cypresses a beautiful white aigrette moved silently upward in the loveliest of lovely arcs, - and I knew that everything was alright, regardless of my fleeting speculations about the strange doings of human beings.

But there were so many things I wanted to chat about, things of genuine interest, and here I have taken up all your time with ridiculous vignettes of no interest whatsoever. But perhaps I shall do better on the morrow, - bound to be a happy day, what with your nice letter in my armoire, awaiting your opportunity to take up the thread of conversation.....

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Tuesday, May 18, 1948.

At first dark tonight, I took out some crumbs to put on the cistern top for a late working mocking bird who may possibly put on a program tonight, what with the big moon already turning on its lamp. I hadn't realized the moon was up, for it was just starting to get dusk, but on glancing at a big old 18th century olive oil jar, I caught the reflection of the Queen of the Night in the dark surface of the water filling the jar. Our local friends of color say it is bad luck to see the moon in a wash tub before sighting it in the heavens, but I was never quite certain if they meant the reflection she was not to see, or if a person, engaged in bathing in the family tub, should take a gander at the skies before hopping in for a Saturday night special. Anyway, I saw the moon in the jar's surface, and I'm in no panic.

From little Miss Ramsey's card, I don't know what hour she was threatening to pass this way, - if any, but having begun this note at 9:30, plantation night is well advanced, and I reckon she probably had to change her plans, for nothing further has been heard of or from her. Perhaps she will make it later in the week before the marvelous weather changes, but I think she had in mind stopping but over night on this trip, so the weather doesn't matter so much.

Varying reverberations, following local doings of last week end, continue to echo along the river. Peter passed this way tonight, telling me he hasn't worked this week and he feels so bad people have been talking about him that he has decided to quit Melrose for a while and get a job in Alexandria for which place he leaves on the morrow. He doesn't know that I know his friend, Maybelle, departed for that place on Monday, and so I assume both contesting parties should be pretty well squared off for another fisty-cuff by this coming week end, and probably they will both land in jail.

My patient continues so-so. On my recommendations to J.H., we didn't go for a ride tonight, what with the thermometer very high and a great dust up and down the road, stirred and re-stirred all day by the fleet of trucks hauling the dirt from the new artificial lake being dug in the pasture to the depth of 12 feet, and being dumped at the emplacement of the new bridgehead.

This afternoon I took a few shots of the old bridge and its relation to the new one, snapshots I shall send along later, so we may have a record of the passing of this old structure which will be eliminated from the end of our Grande Canal, as view from the Terrace at Arenbourg.

So many things to say, so many hopes to be expressed that your new arrangements may be speedily settled and to your complete satisfaction, - and only this:- that I shall be thinking of you....

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Memoranda:

Wed. May 19th:

Have a hazy idea of the sensations a radio broadcaster must feel when advised that technical elements have short-circuited his program. "Interlude of transcribed silence". Letter from Adolph says the Hindu miracle cure of Kenneth's pains was a preconceived plan of his physician who planted the Hindu in the tap room of the Hotel Kenneth frequented, the anticipation being that K's pains stemmed from a mental condition which would be corrected, once he believed in the Hindu's assurance that one a certain day the hocus-pokus would eliminate the neurosis and pains, - which apparently was the correct diagnosis. Things at Arenbourg alright, but rain is needed. Fair hot weather straight ahead.

Thurs. May 20th, 1948:

Post cards from little Miss A. who reports everything alright at 823 Royal, but gives no news of Aunt Lizzie and her operation. Also card from Sister, threatening to honor us, with a Mrs. Clarke at dinner tomorrow. Ed Rand passed this way, bringing two Japanese plum plants and a gardenia producing an abundance of blossoms about half the size of the regular gardenia. Says his doctor brother, Paul King Rand, is leaving the New York insurance company he is with, and is returning to Louisiana. Paul King began with the company, on his graduation from medical school, at a \$750.00 per month salary. Naturally he could reap two or three times that much per month in private practice. Hope he associates himself with his father. Trucks rattle and bang constantly from artificial lake in the pasture hauling dirt to the new bridgehead. Melrose gardens need not only a drink but a bath. Ezra dropped by to see me last night. He thinks Doreatha and he are definitely separated. His mother is keeping house for him and the children. He thinks he will take a new wife unto his bosom shortly. I sat in the moon-drenched white garden until after midnight. Two mocking birds were pouring out their sweetest melodies, making it difficult for me to go indoors and to bed.

Friday, May 21st:-

An "unexpected plaisir" in today's post, detailing hurly-burly circumstances surrounding the 810 set up. May it eventually center definitely around that magical number. Sister brought a Mrs. Clark to dinner at Melrose, leaving immediately after. During the afternoon my patient asked me the woman's name over and over, perhaps a dozen times in two hours. She just couldn't recall her name and apparently had no particular reason to want to, since the personality was nondescript. Worked mightily at Arenbourg early. J. H. at 9 a.m., hearing I was sick, came to say he had made an appointment for me with the or a

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physician of repute in town, saying Eleste would drive me in whenever I wanted her to. The only thing the matter with me was my astonishment at such a tale. On returning to Melrose about 8:45, Mrs. Murphy arrived at the same moment, bringing me four kittens. Just as she pulled out, little Blam, - about twice my size, dropped in to let me know that although he had been taken to the Charity Hospital yesterday for an appendectomy, he was back home, the alarm having proven false. These two unexpected calls, - and what with myself a-drip from my labors, I sent a note by Aurellia to Eleste, saying I would not pass by for a coffee on my way to the post office. Hence all the resulting excitement, - special juices for my delectation arriving while I was in the bath, much telephoning on somebody's part, J. H.'s visit, etc., - all because I tried to save myself five minutes over a coffee cup. How many times do all of us realize we must never try to cut any corners to save ourselves a moment of respite, - and especially social corners, - for fear of having ourselves suddenly smothered by uncalled for flurries of would be kindnesses. The weather continues hot and dry. Me, too.

Saturday, May 22nd.

It seems odd, writing "Saturday" in a Memo. At 6:30 a.m., Aurellia appeared at Arenbourg. On arriving at the big house, the Adam has hustled her off to me to inquire Mrs. Clark's name which she had forgotten during the night. As she had no desire to communicate with the lady, had nothing to say, had no address if she had, I was further stuck by the persistency of the demand when another servant, arriving two hours later, demanded the same question on the mistress's behalf, - Mrs. Clark's name. Nothing is to be deduced from all this save, the general direction of the mind.....A letter from Essie Mae, - which I shall send eventually, and I gather it indicates she must have heard, "in a round about way" of the visit of little Miss Ramsey some months ago, for she takes quite a crack at her. Mrs. Robert Walmsley from San Antonio is spending the week end here. J. H. has gone to Oklahoma City for a few days. I found evidence that someone had been in my locked house during supper tonight. It must have been Peter, for some fresh laundry of his was parked there. I asked him about it. He couldn't imagine how it got there. Neither he nor I will ever be able to imagine it happening again.

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Sun, May 23rd, 1948:

Guess I had better boil down these notations or they will be too bulky when the green light appears. Weather continues hot and dry. No pilgrims. Finished draft of sketch on the Natchitoches country. Took it over to the Rand camp where I found Dr. Rand and his son, Horace. Dr. Rand is doing research to determine approximate number of boats using Cane River between New Orleans and Natchitoches in ante bellum times. Contemplates doing a wall map of the Natchitoches or rather the Cane River country. My primary reason for dropping in to see him was to inquire if he thought anything I might do would tend to slow up the gradual but continued decline of my patient. "Command the sun to stand still" was his response, - "either effort would be as likely to accomplish the desired result". --Reading an interesting book, - H. Raper's "Man Against Rain", - an account of the discovery of a narcotic to induce unconsciousness during operations, and the resulting squabble among partisans of three New England men and one Georgian to claim the distinction. --Tried unsuccessfully to track down invitation to Learning, - should have liked to hear discussion of Henry Adam's Virgin and Dynamo. Ezra's boys, - Bill and "ee, came to pay me a little visit, reporting the shirts and neckties (from the Waco contribution) "made uses look pretty" at the school program Thursday night. They said papa's mama is staying with them while their mama, Coreatha, is with her papa, Dee-Dee-Boy, on Little River. --Could have used a couple of laughs between daylight and dark for comic relief, but denied myself any search for them by concentrating on correspondence and looking forward to a 9 o'clock moon and mocking bird songs by midnight, - and Arenbourg by tomorrow's dawn.

Monday, May 24th: -

Enchanted to have your card this morning, indicating a limited sojourn at 595 and thence a return to home base. Knowing nothing of a dozen circumstances regarding the best method of receiving mail in that area, I know you will find the best and most convenient to your own good self. A nice letter from Dr. Butler, dated from Laurel Hill. A surprise in a printed post card from New Orleans, announcing "The Unhurried Years" by Dr. Pierce Butler, - a child of which he made no mention in his letter by the same post. A copy of this volume, revolving about Laurel Hill, will go forward to you when contacts are established. Ordered some more yellow roses for Arenbourg from Wayside. Also some Regal lilies, etc. It remains terribly hot and dry. Our little magnolias can take the dryness, for I am toating water to them, but the heat had better slacken, - I hope. Another note from Miss Nellie, about to hop off for Vicksburg and Atlanta. Just as I wrote that her Atlanta address returns to my mind, - 1465 North Morningside Drive. Glad it came to the surface after all these days. --The General writes the little one will be married in Germany June 12th, the parents will not attend because of circumstances, illnesses in family, etc., in the U. S. Sister writes children want to spend summer with their grandmother. Marvelous idea. Rands telephoned, reporting the reading to a small group last night of my preliminary sketch on Natchitoches county. It must have been a dumb audience as the reading was well received, - and I hadn't even completed some of these sentences, but if they liked it....

2995

May 25th, (Tuesday:

Much spading at Arenbourg, - what with all the heat and dryness, so things can lap up ever drop of dew, and every rain drop, - just in case any should pass this way.

Voo-doo, - or "Hoo-doo" as it is locally styled, was the big topic of the day, with all the servants and field hands contriving to settle things to their satisfaction through that medium, accounting for strange and scandalous behavior by putting it on to the evil influences exerted by this enemy or that. What with the heat to begin with and the nervous state they succeeded in working up, it was really quite entrancing for anyone who might like to learn something about aboriginal folk ways without having to bother about a trip to the heart of the "ark continent.

Mattie, the cook, tells me that Peter came to her house last night at 8, and on her recommendation, let her house at 9, going across the river and up the road some three miles, where a French (Mulatto) lady, "what card cuts and knows all about such like", told Peter, - as passed on to "attie this morning, that two dark ladies (meaning negresses) had hexed him with something in his drink, and that accounts for his having lately beat up "aybelle so often. I didn't tell Mattie that Peter came to my house at 9 last night, asking if he could sleep on Grandpere Augustin's pew on my gallery. He could and did. According to "attie, when you are hexed, you know what you are doing but you can't help doing it. Peter has no memory of having entered my house and deposited his fresh laundry on a chair, and then left, locking the door behind him. He knows he didn't do that on Saturday, - it must have been a spirit. What a business, - and the strangest part of it is that even my "thopian seems to believe it in part or in whole. How lucky are these people to be able to find convincing proof that their unsocial doings is not attributable to their own lack of self discipline but merely the evil put upon them by agents outside themselves. If only I could charge off my own short-comings with such delight to my conscience.

And Aurellia announced this morning that "essie's m baby can't sleep these nights, he is so warm, and his long hair, - long enough for her to braid, makes him sweat so on the back of his neck. I asked her why in the world she didn't give the child a hair cut. "If you cut a baby's hair before he's two, then he'll always have a heavy tongue and wont ever be able to talk." Well, for Heaven's sake, - and I give up.

Celeste was in a panic this morning and called on me for aid and comfort, after telephoning her physician. - a couple of days ago she developed a heat rash. This morning she learned that her maid's mama, - that remarkable Elmer, was or is being treated in an Alexandria hospital for syphilis, and so Celeste immediately decided the disease had been transmitted to her through food the maid had prepared. I put on my most professional stare, examined the heat rash with apparant profundity, and pronounced her in need of some talcum powder. -----My patient, thanks to proddings by Sam Brown, raised hell with Aurellia all day because she couldn't say her "B C's. Tomorrow the patient will be down and A

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Aurellia will have dried her eyes and forgotten all,
and "attie says that Sam Brown has put a hex on the Madam, so
everybody's peculiarities are all explained away, and
Cane River flows leisurely on.....

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2996

Wed., May 26th, 1948:

Shreveport got 2 and a fraction inches
of rain in 25 minutes last eveng. Watchitoches got nothing.
"Us-es" got a nice slow gentle drizzle all night, with cloudy
weather this morning, and another nice slow drizzle all evening
and tonight. It will do our floral friends at Arenbourg a
world of good. Just for fun, I measured, -somewhat roughly,
your iny mimosas today. The lower branches extend about 10
feet from the main stem. After this rain, they ought to jump
in every old direction.

An invitation to Jeff Lambin, Jr.'s wedding came in this
morning's post. It will be held in the "atchez Presbyterian
church, and an enclosed card invites one to the reception
at Stanton "all afterward. Did I remark it was set for mid
June, and 7:30 in the evening, - seemingly a curious hour.
I don't know the bride, - one Mattie Jo Simmons, which certainly
is an unlovely name, I find. Once, in Magnolia, Miss., I
met one Beulah "ae Byrd Simmons, but she has nothing to do
with the case, I guess, except her name isn't any prettier.

A letter from little Miss Alberta to the Madam, adminished
the letter not to let Aurellia drop her studies. That set the
tune for the day, and did the Madam keep it up. This after-
noon poor Aurellia came to me in tears. Between sobs she
explained she couldn't stand it any longer, for the Madam
had just told her she was "as stupid as a chickleass". I
asked her a couple of times over what the comparison was, but
could never make any sense out of it. Finally, in some
embarrassment, Aurellia explain it in French: "la derriere
d'un poulet". Lord, have mercy, what in the world do you
suppose the Madam could have said that Aurellia understood
as "chickleass". We certainly live from domestic panic to
panic, and I sometimes roar to myself, in spite of the
heartbreak that goes along with the situation. -- I must
write little Miss A., asking her to stop "holding the thought"
on Melrose pedagogy, or at least to skip reference to it
in future letters, whereupon she will probably immediately
write the Madam, asking her why

Thursday, May 27th:

Gentle showers continue, which is grand.
--For the first time in 4 years, Aurellia failed to appear
this morning. The overseer reported her indisposed. Sam
Brown, helpful as always, reported her as up and doing.
The Madam reported: And just to think that I thought her fond
of us. Mexican blood, - always hot tempered." I sent Aurellia
my opinion: -that since the General and wife were coming
for the week end and Pat had already arrived, I thought it
would be grand if she didn't return before Monday at the earliest.
The rain brought all the Arenbourg day lilies into bloom over
night. The swag at the West end of the North elephant trap and
the East one on the "outh trap were a blaze of golden glory, -
and, - poor things, - they make it by themselves with scarcely ever
a helping hand. Beau Mack came early today to cut my hair. He
tells me Doreatha has returned to Ezra and the children. --Sunshine
through a shower this even brought forth a double rainbow. Hope you h
had two at least also.....

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Friday, May 28th, 1948.

All domestic problems solved, Aurellia back on her job and Sam Brown back on his, slyly waiting to put another crimp in the picture. Strange what Rasputin domination he has over the minds of the Madam and Dan. -- Reading a book by R. E. Lauderbach, - "These Are the Russians". Believe Lauderbach was in Russia for Time Magazine during the war. After all these years, was surprised and disappointed to learn that Peterhof and the several palaces of Catherine and the Alexanders about St. Petersburg were pillaged and destroyed in the early 1940's. --- Peter must still be "hexed". He tapped on my window at a quarter of 3 this morning, asking for a Coca Cola. I told him there would be no more social calls at such unearthly hours. -- The heavy dampness made weed pulling at Arenbourg grand a couple of hours later. The heat and humidity continue, with another fine shower at first dark. I'm under the impression I got a glimpse of life along the Louisiana "witch cane hedge, adjoining the highway, which I thought last winter's cold had killed. Gave the hedge a good weeding as a gesture of encouragement. Heard more details of Sister's visit to Magnolia last Friday, following her visit here. Dr. Knipmeyer first mentioned to me that Miss Sally has had to go to Alexandria to recuperate. It revolved around a porch swing, originally coming from "elrose, which was, - it was supposed, sold with the Cloutierville house, to the Worsleys, who, in turn, disposed of it to Miss Sally. It seems there was a vast to-do about the thing, and somehow J. H. was appealed to to sit on Sister, which he did.. Letter from Robina says Dr. Miller has inquired if she is to spend her vacation in "arlin, Texas this summer, with a probably view of Dr. M. joining her there, - bent on examining local real estate. The suspicion is raised that apparently any one with a white elephant for sale might unload it on the little doctor. Let's hope she doesn't hear about Cloutierville parcels on the market. Learned from Celeste that Charles "azurette has been quite ill, - but know nothing of particulars. At such times, I worry about such people who are devotees of Mrs. Eddy. Lord! Lord!

Satu., May 29th,

With the same capacity of a child, gravely ill, to suddenly return to normalcy, - note split infinitive, - so the big house seems to have automatically returned to an even keel, with everyone happy and momentarily, at least, in balance. The Joe Henrys came unexpectedly from Beaumont in the afternoon. I had an opportunity to chat with the General. His son is being married in the town of Langshet, which I do not know. When the Prague government fell a few months ago, the "boy was on the border and spoke of the vast number of vast number of refugees crossing the barrier into the American occupied zone, all soldiers of Uncle Sam looking the other way.. The General says Ethyl Corporation had built a big oil refining factory in Germany prior to the war which escaped destruction but which has vanished eastward subsequently. It was originally some miles north-east of Berlin. Ethyl cannot get it back, and not a brick remains to indicate its former location. Weather marvelous, - hot and humid, with everything at Arenbourg a-jumpin'.

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Sun., May 30th, 1948.

Wonder why I used but one side of foregoing pages. Perhaps I should have somebody examine my mind..... Hope you are having a good outing or at least a restful Memorial Day week end. I believe May 30th is a national holiday, but only Federal agencies suspend operations in Louisiana. The General told me the people in "thyl" preferred to work, their contract calling for 6 paid holidays in the year, - holidays which they select, and the 30th is not one of them. He told "olly" Walmsley he is not buying a home in Baton Rouge, that he doesn't like the climate, and when his present job is given up, he will retire some place where atmospheric conditions are better. I'll bet they plan returning to Washington which they both like, but which isn't too famous for its climate. The Joe Henrys and the Stephen Henrys returned to Beaumont and Baton Rouge, resp. Pat came to sit with me for an hour at first dark, trying to guess some broad channels of the future.

May 31st, Monday, 1948:

Lovely mail, including note of temporary move to 595, with an inexplicable feeling that one way contact is maintained with the promise of two way just in the offing. A note from Dr. Miller mentions a high powered magnifying glass being sent, but no reference to real estate. Pilgrims included Ruth Cross (Mrs. C. W. Palmer), who leaves shortly for New York. Her husband is dying, I believe, since she says that in spite of strong opiates, he suffers much. He didn't come with her from Winfield for today's visit, - auto traveling being too enervating for him, - and yet they take off by car for New York shortly, - which somehow lacks sense to my way of figuring. Dolly Walmsley told me of a little conversation she had with my patient, wherein the latter remarked that when the General came here from Washington last year, he paid a dollar a day at a Washington kennel for the maintenance of his dog during his absence. Dolly says she remarked that the General was doing as much by me during the General's absence from his mother. The Madam responded, according to Dolly, that eventually, should she die, God would take care of me. God and the General, well, I declare. I'm reading "Three Came Home" by Agnes Keith or some such name. It is an excellently written book on an unpleasant subject, - life in a Japanese prison camp on Borneo and Sumatra. The weather continues wonderfully warm and humid, with everything growing madly at Arenbourg. J. H. and Celeste in New Orleans where J. H. is exploring the possibility of packaging pecans in decorative containers with a view to retailing them. He envisions a package bearing the words: "Melrose Plantation Pecans", the same set off with a picture of the big house on the box. If only the making of Pralines would come up for considerations, I should vote for it with a view to eating up the profits.....

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Tuesday, June 1st, 1948:

The Marvelous weather continues here, although a letter from Mr. Bachelier reports a want of rain, for the fine showers we had last week seem to have skipped the Little River area.

The servants appealed to me today for sheets. Six months ago there were perhaps 75 or 100 sheets in the armoires of the big house. On preparing the laundry for town, they discovered there weren't enough left to put fresh ones on the beds. Sam Brown appears to be doing very well by himself, both in providing his own cabin with linen but probably in retailing it, too. Yesterday I noticed all the lamp bulbs were missing from the Dr. Miller cabin and from the African House. My patient is too flighty to be told of these depredations, and neither she nor Jan would believe their pet servant guilty. I sent to the store for bulbs and sheets. Four of the latter were sent with beds currently being occupied by Jan, Pat, Dolly, the Madam and I, four doesn't seem excessive. I shall ask the store to order a quantity.

The Madam had a note from Dr. Miller, saying she plans to come to Melrose to stay just as soon as she forsakes Bergen Pines. Sister writes they are heading for Florida on the 20th of this month, and in July will fly to Wisconsin for a visit with Shreveport friends having a camp there.

I continue to devote myself to Arenbourg at dawn and to Melrose the rest of the time, reading when I can grab off seconds "finished" "Three Came Home" and found it beautifully done. It was recorded by an excellent reader, and that probably confirmed my favorable impression.

Thursday, June 3rd:

Elegant mail, and the world looks alright. Can imagine, - and I'm sorry for you, all the confusion of moving to 595. How nice to learn of local situations, the unexpected guest, etc. The latter's reason for honoring you reminds me of a line a negro once used, albeit innocently, on me: "Didn't have nothin' else to do, so thought I'd come by." So glad you saw the Berlin paintings at the Metropolitan, and thanks for telling me subjects on display. Puzzled, in a way, at attitude concerning packages for Europe, but then, on second thought, realize I have frequent examples of curious mental re-actions in this neighborhood, and perhaps one is no more odd than the other. Thank the Lord two people comprehend such impulses to assist the less fortunate, - and plough straight ahead regardless. You ask about Carolyn Ramsey. No news since the post card threatening to come this way one Tuesday. Reading glass came today from Dr. Miller, - alright but not of great assistance. Letter from Mary Rhodes which I didn't get to read. One from Dr. Eleanor, stationed at Gulfport, Miss., hopes to get transferred to Woodville. Thanks again for making me happy with your nice letter.....

3000

Friday, June 4th, 1948:

The hot, dry weather continues; glad we got last week's rain that passed Little River bye. The nightly dews are carrying everyth alright so far.

Today's pilgrims included Dr. and Mrs. Oberdyke of Centenary College, Shreveport. Dr. O. was headed for Baton Rouge where L. S. U. Press is bringing out a book of his. The reason for his stop at Melrose was to inquire if I would help him with material for a book he is doing on plantation houses of North Louisiana, Cane River being somehow squeezed into that geographical unit. I would.

For the first time in a couple of weeks, J. H. recommended a ride to the Madam. It was 5 p.m., and the thermometer was in the 90's. I frowned. We went. On our return, it was nip and tuck to pilot her into the house. J. H. remarked to me this morning that he had been wrong in suggesting the airing and thought it unwise to attempt it again.

An incident of the ride tells much. He took us down the Montrose Lane, driving slowly, and stopping occasionally to point out progress on the new bridge and the grading of dirt on the new highway, the new water course being dug to supply material for the construction, etc. As we returned home, via La Cote Joyeuse, the Madam inquired, - out of a clear blue sky, - if the State had started work on the Montrose Lane as yet. Perhaps that was the first inkling J. H. had of which way the wind was blowing.

Mary Rhodes write her new book is patterned on her earlier short story, *The Cherry Cape*. Wants me to come to "atchez, which isn't new.

Celeste and Mme. Regard have gone to So. Louisiana, Pat heading out with them on way to Texas. On Madam Regard's return, she and Celeste will drive to Brandstown, Kentucky. I'll drive to Arenbourg in a few hours, so I had better fold.

Sat. June 5th, 1948:

Following all the recent talk about cups and saucers, an imposing supply of plain white ones was obtained. But the talk must have put cups and saucers into Aurellia's mind indelibly, for she has been talking cups and saucers almost daily, and about the virtue of having pretty ones. In sequence thereof, she gave me a surprise this morning by presenting me with a very gaily decorated set, costing, as she explained, fourty gents. Aurellia explained that white folks "hadn't ought to drink out of just plain china, and that in another week or two, she is going to purchase the properly decorated cup and saucer for the Madam. That is what the Madam will call a sight, and it strikes me that if Josiah Wedgewood expects to sell his wares South of the Mason-Dixon line, he would do well to dash in some red and green when turning out his exquisitely simple white designs. Few pilgrims from afar today, but quite a few friends from Little River and about, and no news to speak of, save the weather, which continues hot-hot.....

3000E

Sunday, June 6th, 1948.

The Wenks came for dinner.

After the Madam had folded up, Caroline Dormon and "Ole Virginie" drove in. Caroline came to sit with me for a while at first dark. No especial news.

Mattie had much to tell me today about the nice time she had Saturday night, watching the youths and maidens dancing at Alphonse's Social Club. No "Hoo-doo" was working, and everybody was just as lovin'. Many of the ladies wore full skirt that swish way out when dancing, while the youths wear their shirt-tails outside their pants so they may swish, too. It is an interesting fact that the local negroes seem to enjoy "swinging out" in partners or individually, - the response to the gramophone seeming to be the motivating impulse, and no especial desire to join hands in executing their steps. It is interesting, too, that when a couple dances together, the partners seem quite indifferent as to the combination, - male or female. Mattie says that those two youthful truck drivers, - Little King and Mr. Brew, dance to nice together, while in the older brackets, Wiley's wife and another lady, perhaps 50, are equally entrancing as they swing out together. In another expression, the individual gentleman or lady enjoys swinging out by himself. In mentioning this phase, Mattie used a phrase I find delightful: - "Bertha Bluff, she sure do likes to swing out by herself. You sure should see her, 'cause when she puts her mind to it, she sure do dance up a breeze". I'd love to know what they have in mind by that phrase, - whether they would give the impression the person is so light on his feet he seems to dance on a breeze, or if he dances so wholeheartedly that he appears to stir up a breeze, - but of course I never ask, for asking would call attention to the originality of the phrase, and so tend to slow up the normal impulse to spill out words and phrases that, in unguarded moods, "cross their minds". J. H. says Senator Fredericks is slated to head a political Board that will dominate every phase of Louisiana education from L. S. U. on down, with every teacher in the State subject to his whim. The proposed legislation has struck a snag in Committee, with the L. S. U. Board protesting violently, but it is expected the Governor will have his way and Mr. Fredericks, - Bertha fairly harmless but wholly incompetent individual already scheduled to occupy the office.

Finished "Human Destiny" by Comte du Nouy, - a solid piece of business in the study of evolution and the need for coupling of Christian instruction in the teaching of Science. The author is the son of the lady who wrote "Amities Amoureuses" and a descendant of Corneille. Alas, I fold.

1008

3002

June 7th, 1948, Monday:

An elegant letter, filled with interesting particulars. So glad 595 has worked out so satisfactory thus far. I shall continue to keep my fingers crossed. Can readily appreciate regret over time consumed in traveling back and forth, but hope accompanying freedom in mid-town may compensate a little. Love account of view from your vantage point. If the top of the hotel you see resembles the roof of the Chapel at Versailles, then sure enough, it is the Pierre. I can't recall at what cross street stands 595.

Heat is upper 90's, but I was cold during the afternoon. Suppose I have a slight fever from too many red bugs. Shall fold up early, for I want to feel up and doing tomorrow at dawn when I shall march to Arenbourg to plant some Lowell Thomas yellow roses that arrived from Wayside Gardens, Mentor, Ohio, today. I am soaking their toes in water tonight, and shall have them all placed tomorrow before the dew has disappeared.

The Madam told Sister that Dr. Miller plans to return to Louisiana, whereupon Sister asked me if I would write the little doctor, offering her the Cloutierville house as a very favorable real estate acquisition. I shall be glad to handle that matter, and when I get through with my sale's talk, Dr. Miller ought to be heading toward Canada and not Cloutierville. Today's incoming letter and yellow roses ought to guarantee dreams of quality and abundance tonight.

Tuesday, June 8th, 1948:

St. Medard, as Cane River calls June 8th, - but the rest of the country calls it St. Swithin's Day, but both agree if it rains on the 8th, it will rain for 40 days. - I hope, for it is too hot and too dry for things to grow here now. I planted the yellow roses early this morning, but I have misgivings, for only this year has it occurred to me that Nurseries must keep their plants in cold storage, shipping them from that quarter rather than shipping directly from the garden. In the present instance, that makes a heap of difference, what with the cold storage probably not about a 20 degree reading while the thermometer here is in the 90's. Sure the shock must be too violent. The roses were ordered weeks ago before it was so hot, but delivery was made but yesterday. How I figured out the cold storage angle was simply because plants from Ohio, shipped in June, were bound to have leaves and the sap well up in the plants, had they been dug from the ground and shipped directly from out-of-doors to out-of-doors.

From the Gages today came two of the loveliest white crepe de chine white shirts ever created. I haven't heard a peep or had a line from them since the telephone conversation of which I understood nothing some weeks back. The gift is certainly a generous gesture on their part, but I can't figure out how I rate it.

Paul Veith must be mad at me. Today another New Orleans book-seller wrote, saying Mr. Veith had passed the order for the Butler books to him, and he was unable to fill the order. Strange Mr. V. didn't advise me, although he seemed quite ruffled when I declined selling him the missing Johnston (negro) diary. I shall write Dr. Butler direct.....

3003

Wed., June 9th, 1948:

Hot-hot; dry-dry. What with its earthen walls, this old residence I occupy remains pleasantly cool, but the thin boarded, tin topped shot-gun houses of many of the darkies must be like ovens these nights. Aurellia complains that Bessie's baby cried all night, he was so hot, - and yet they refuse to give him a haircut for fear of making him "heavy-tongued.."

I reckon the road heading toward La Cote Joyeuse will be heavy, if it isn't already, for tonight there is a movie at Sammy's and a frolic, with "swinging-out" at Alphonse's Social Club. The negroes are already beginning to worry about weekOend after next, for the 19th comes on a Saturday, which means they will be paid off on Friday night. By the time Saturday dawns and it is time for them to celebrate their holiday with a picnic, they will have already spent their weekly wages. Then will come the problem of Saturday night's frolic at the Club or movie, - and then there remains Sunday in even more straightened circumstances. I guess they all are sorry that Earle Long's 50 dollar a month check for the aged wasn't mailed out in June instead of July, as scheduled, for a heap of Grandmas would most certainly be called on.

Quite unannounced and unexpected, Sister blew in while we were at supper. The doctor came with her, and a youthful Dr. Jaeger to whom they hoped to sell the Cloutierville house. They reported 3 and a half inches of rain in Shreveport, which didn't help us.

Forgot to mention, relative to Caroline Dormon's visit, that she is vastly upset over the lack of proper pronunciation and general diction on the radio, especially in hill-billy programs. She told me that something really has to be done about it, and that people in the Birarwood area, - one or two negro families and some white trash on whom she is working to perfect their speech just insist on listening to radio programs heavily sprinkled with dialect. But whenever she catches them so listening, - and they adore that type of program, she makes them turn off the station immediately. Now hasn't she cut herself a fine piece of pie, insisting radio programs eliminate dialect in favor of Oxford English, and forbidding her neighbors to listen to the programs that please them. In my mind's eye, I can so plainly see Lyle making a vulgar grimace as he remarks: "That's the way with old maids.....if they would only get themselves a man, then the rest of the world could go on enjoying its radio programs."

3003

Carolyn 6/8/48
3004

Thursday, May 10th, 1948.

Memorandum:

How nice.....

Your card arrived in today's post, and I hasten to respond by air to thank you for all the comfort that comes just with knowing a means of contact.

A couple of other groups of Memoranda go forward by ordinary mail. They are sent in order that you may be kept abreast of day-to-day doings, although I think there is nothing of any particular interest in any of the entries, and some, I suspect, are exceedingly dull. But I send them all regardless, feeling you would prefer to eliminate the uninteresting ones yourself.

On the home front, all is rocking along alright, although Arenbourg is much in want to rain, - but apparently getting along alright in spite of the current drought. Because of the prolonged heat, my patient sags a little from day to day, but that is to be expected.

Throughout the State, from individuals, the press and the radio, one hears much about the taxes being imposed by the new Government. I chatted a little while with J. H. tonight. He had something interesting to tell me. ex-Senator Fredericks, now Secretary to Governor Long, told J. H. that the Governor had told him quite frankly that it was his intention to break the State of Louisiana just as hard as he could during his four year regime, leaving it to his successor to worry about trying to put the financial picture back together again.

Earle Long, according to some of his intimate acquaintances, is a "pig-headed" number, and will probably do exactly what he says he will do, - so far as wrecking the financial status of the State goes. Perhaps his brother, Julius, had this fact in mind the other day when he remarked that Earle was heading for the same fate that over-took Huey.

J. H. told me, too, that the Wenks came by his house last night with Dr. Yaeger, - see final memorandum, - and the latter had many a barbed wire to hook at Jews with, - even though Celeste tried to change the subject with frantic effort. Some day Dr. Yaeger's face is likely to flush a little when the racial tinge of his Cloutierville hosts become known to him.

1008

3005

The enclosure speaks for itself, and I think you will agree that it is quite interesting. It accounts for the somewhat prolonged silence in the recent weeks, but does not, I regret to say, excuse the bad habit with which the writer seems to be possessed in the correspondence field.

Somehow I place this particular friendship in the "long-range" group. The personality is good and the gifts of personality and accomplishment are fine. But somehow the big gaps in the contacts leave one wondering if each succeeding silence will ever be bridged. But I think the effort is worth while, and in view of the out-lined job that seems to be just in the offing, there would be a marvelous opportunity for work to be done that would fit into a flock of books just like one, two, three.

"But Only God" would make quite a nice title, I think, for an elegant photographic book on trees, and I think I shall recommend it to the lady, suggesting that in her travels up and down the country, she keep such a possibility in mind, and her camera all cocked. One advantageous thing about such a job would be the probably necessity of traveling the same sections at different seasons of the year, thus enabling her to record scenes and trees with and without their foliage! For the St. Francisville graveyard book, for example, it seems to me that the subject itself almost requires excellent studies of both dismal, dying autumn scenes and gay, promise-full Spring ones.

I was struck by the inquiry as regards Helen Baldwin, for I was under the impression that the bad habit in not keeping the typewriter going in that direction did not hold.

Among our colored friends, I have one or two things to report. Our friend, Clemence, I understand, has undertaken to raise a cotton crop, and enlisting the aid of Yank, who lived with her formerly, she has opened her home to him once more. And I am glad.

Last night there was a frolic at the Melrose Social Club. Clyde Claude Emmett Davis, you may recall, left his wife about a year ago, - his wife having been Jackie, Clemence's daughter. He subsequently begot himself a wife on Little River, and a child by the same. But last night at the Social Club, his old love for his former wife flared up again. He made objections to Jackie talking with Cy, - Mrs. Pany's brother. And the latter, probably a little high, cut Clyde Claude Emmett Davis across the chest, - artfully, it is said, but not seriously. Eventually Clyde Claude ought to have quite an exhibit of knife wounds, I should imagine.

And this is all, except to say how nice it is to have your card and to know the contact has been re-established. I know not why but somehow tonight's chat seems ever so much more direct once more, and withal as satisfying to my soul, - just to know.....

Friday, May, or rather June 11, 1948.

3006

Memorandum:

What an unexpected plaisir to have another surprise note from you on today's post.

I am so glad to have the general layout of your current situation, - 595 versus 810, and it goes without saying that I feel certain whatever arrangements you conclude will bear a favorable harvest, since both places seem to possess their respective advantages and disadvantages.

You made your little trip to the Botanical Gardens sound so delicious that I could almost share the perfume of the rose garden, - especially as there are a few blossoms of the same sort on my desk, - but from Arenbourg. Somehow I envision the Botanical ones ever so distinctly, what with the Arenbourg ones so close by as symbols.

And thanks for all the interesting particulars about the radio doings. I never seem to get much, what with these long daylight hours blotting out many of the stations that come in more distinctly when the cover of darkness repairs the electron holes that let meandering waves escape before reaching me in "big day". I am still unable to round up a station within reach that carries Invitation to Learning, - much to my regret. You were perfectly right in surmising that I should so much have liked the discussion of Voltaire's *Siecle de Louis XIV.* I suppose that is a subject on which the speakers might readily let themselves wander off onto particulars regarding the author rather than his subject, although even if they should stick to the book, - the least interesting of the three possibilities, - Voltaire, Louis XIV, or the *Siecle* itself, - still, I should ever so much like to hear some people with ideas talk on Quatorze himself, although any segment of such a topic ought to be entertaining.

It occurred to me not so long ago that about 90 per cent of my interest in Europe, - following the close of the Renaissance, begins to manifest itself again only after the advent of Louis XIV! and practically everything that has first claim on my enthusiasm in Europe somehow stems from around 1650 to 1800.

This thought dawned on me as I sat on the terrace at Arenbourg recently, turning through the lovely Marly plates. I must give this matter some more thought, such as why it was that as a child when I first began to read, I instinctively began absorbing the last half of the 17th and practically all of the 18th century as the period which seemed to mean more than another I learned anything about, - including the 20th in which I myself moved.

Probably this can be explained by the fact that I was undoubtedly born an introvert, and so naturally found a better world in the order and elegance of the XIV and XV Louises, and accordingly incorporated them unto myself, thus saving me a great deal of trouble in having to create an entirely new one that would be exclusively all my own.

Be that as it may, I am glad Invitation to Learning is going to do the book, and I shall be enchanted if you have the good luck to hear it. It seems to me Columbia used to supply transcriptions of these programs, but I can't remember for certain. If the discussion turned out interesting, it might be worth having, although I am at a loss to know to whom, - save you, I might ever get to read me the thing, since you are probably the only person in the world who shares with me a common interest in such subjects.

3007

And now, - at long last - , and I know you aren't going to believe it, -
I can tell you that subscription to Life appears to have started with the
June 7th, 1948 issue. At least a copy came to hand today, - the first since
you presented me with my subscription, - and I was so floored that it actually
came to hand that I still keep turning to glance at it, just to make sure.
I hope I acknowledged the copies you sent last week, - and I presume I mentioned
them at the time, although what with keeping my daily chats down as much
as possible, I may have neglected to record my plaisir at the time, thinking
I would refer to some of the wonderful subjects appearing of late, - especially
the illustrations in such articles as those dealing with the Reformation, etc.
etd. It is so nice keeping a file of these, for eventually there will be an
opportunity to turn through them together to skim ~~through~~ through their texts and
to go into them, fortified with frosty glasses at our elbows in the foreground
and the purple hills of Montrose off on the horizon.

Today's mail was rather heavy; with quite a few letters for the Madam I must
knock off responses tonight before folding up, and there are a few I shall have
to answer for myself, - one from Robina, one to Dr. Miller, and several unread
ones to be gone into on the morrow, - Caroline Dormon, Dora and so on.

And I must eventually go to bed in order to get in a few early licks at
Arenbourg in the morning and so get back here before plumbers arrive to
tinker with a gas water heater in my bath room. No sign of rain, but this
far everything at Arenbourg.....

3008

Dora 6/9/48
3008

Sunday, June 13th, 1948.

Memorandum:

In Saturday's post came the nice fat package of Life
so that our file must be just about in order, and from here on
out, since your subscription has begun coming through.

I had thought to turn through the several issues just arrived
over the week end, but what with one thing and another, I never did
get around to examine more than the first few pages of the earliest
issue.

In spite of the excessive heat, there seemed to be more
pilgrims than usual while last night somebody must have been
tinkering with the electric current, making use of it altogether
sketchy and intermittent, so that I abandoned picture-looking for
hammering this machine.

I had thought I would round up my efforts at completing a
couple of dullish books, but with the hit and miss flow of
electricity, I abandoned that idea, too. For lack of anything
better in biography, I had skimmed around a little in an old
schmirker called "The Soong Sisters" which certainly contains some
interesting particulars about those three remarkable ladies,
but a volume which is badly put together and much wanting in
interest rousing qualities. I frequently found myself all at
sea in trying to keep straight in my mind which one of the three
sisters the author might be talking about at a particular time, and
ended up by discovering the impression to be a wonder in
composite character impressions. I think the author might well
have taken a page from the curious Wendell sisters of 5th Avenue
and 39th Street fame, who named all their succeeding dogs, - over
a period of 50 years, - the same thing, - "Tobey", - for when such
names as "Essling", Maeling and "Sing-sing" or whatever, are
muddled over frequently enough in the same sentence, I find it
well nigh impossible to unscramble their several identities.
I am under the impression one gets a clearer concept in reading
these names than by listening to them read. But as for myself, -
I was as confused about which was which as I was when
(interruption) when a friend was forever talking about the
separate virtues of his three offspring, - triplets, withal,
who were styled Alexandra, Alexandria and Alexandrine.

The above interruption was occasioned by the arrival
and quite unexpected, - of the Dark Duke, whom I had not seen in some
time, and Wiley Anthony. The latter spent some months in a
Federal Penitentiary a couple of years back for operating a
still, but he, at the age of 44, always refers to in most
delicately, as "the time when I was in the Reform School. It

8008

3009

was quite interesting to her him and Log compare notes on prison conditions as noted by Wiley in Texarkana and Dallas, as opposed to doings at the American jail in Modena, Italy.

Mrs. Rand and Mrs. Pattison left the big house about 5 p.m., this afternoon, and asked me to come over to the Rand camp for supper around 7 o'clock, which I should much like to have done, had not too many Henrys dropped in to keep me engaged in various kinds of conversation until it was too late for me to head out.

I was sorry to learn from Mrs. Rand, during the moment I saw her alone on the way to the car, that Mrs. Pattison is taking the approach of cataracts with much good grace, for it seems only the public knows about that phase of her difficulties, which, in reality, are much more serious, for it appears to the specialists that the cataracts are but a minor manifestation of what seems to be complete blindness, toward which she is headed.

I have asked Mrs. Rand to bring Mrs. Pattison up to the River again often, - and soon, and I shall invite her to my house on the pretext that I want her to hear some particular record or other, but I shall of course merely be using that excuse to get the lady acquainted with the reading machine and all its blessings, so that if, - and may God grant it otherwise, she should have to fall back on the reading machine for entertainment, she will be quite familiar with the appearance of the thing and its operations, which, I suppose, may make it ever so much easier for her, should the evil day arrive.

It seems that Log and Wiley had been fishing during the afternoon, and had passed this way with a view to inviting me to a fish fry at Wiley's tonight. Wiley explained that his wife, Honey, was stirring up the repast right then. But I declined because I had already declined one at their next door neighbors earlier in the evening when I thought I was going to the Rand camp, and it might be upsetting to one neighbor if I rejected one invitation and then accepted the like one a day afterwards.

A note from Essie Mae to the Madam indicates that there is to be a big old meeting of State or National Librarians at Natchitoches College from August 8th to 14th, which Essie Mae will attend. I shall write her tonight, inviting her to spend the nights and as much of the days down here, which makes me think that I must advise Carolyn Ramsey of this possibility, since those two ladies will not converge on Melrose at the same moment.

So many other things to talk about, but I shall have to let this slide for this sitting. It has been cool in the New York area this week end, according to my radio, and I do hope you enjoyed the atmosphere and found a little opportunity for radio listening and for relaxation.

1108

3010

Monday, June 14th, 1948.

Memorandum:

It looks as though the Weather granted us a special dispensation today, for this afternoon a little rain fell from about a mile above Arenbourg to a mile below. It wasn't much, but sufficient to wash off the leaves and giving them some extra breathing facilities. I'm sorry for everybody else in the Parish but I'm glad for our little friends who really will benefit greatly from this very special hand out.

Except for this little ten minute interlude of rain, the day was hot-hot with our thermometer hovering around 100 both morning and afternoon. Tonight I think it may have fallen to the upper 70's which means some extra drops of dew for our side of La Cote Joyeuse, all of which we can take with gratitude.

There were but two or three pilgrims today, - I suppose all the others must have melted somewhere or other in the big road, but I never did see such a Monday for colored callers, and I can't imagine such a coincidence.

Before 7 this morning eight different people had tapped on my door, none of them apparently wanting anything more than a little chat, - or possibly a cup of coffee.

Before 9 a.m., Joe Rocque, - Celine's husband, had called on the Madam. Spry for his 84 years, he was nevertheless traveling abroad sufficiently early, it seemed to me. Fat Dorsey Creighton by ten o'clock had walked out from Little River and paid her respects to the Madam, to what purpose I know not, and by 11 a.m., some ancient scare-crow darkie, as tall and lank as a bean poll, was seated in a corner of the upstairs sitting room, singing hymns like mad for the Madam's sole delectation. This old fellow is from somewhere below Cloutierville and how he got up her in all this heat, heaven alone knows. For some reason known old to the Madam, she seems to enjoy staging this ultra private rehearsals to which I alone am usually bidden but to which I always veer off. Although the old darkie apparently likes the show, he always fills me with embarrassment, the same type of discomfiture I feel when witnessing a 5 or 6 year old child forced to speak a piece before a huge and frightening audience. I reckon this old songster was out for making a dollar, and so I let him get inside the house, but after two other random callers had passed in an out, following his departure, I put the lid down for the big house and told the servants to let in no more for today.

Just after the little rain this afternoon, Ezra and Log came to see me. Their wives, Doreatha and Maxine, are sisters, and the husbands had told their wives they were coming to me for

3011

advise. Of course they weren't coming for advise at all, but merely to tell me what they were planning, hoping I would give them courage by a stout Amen, - which they didn't get.

Both of them, it appears, think they can make it with their wives no longer than through the harvesting of the present crop, - probably in October, when they each plan to give the wives half the crop money, after which the husbands plan to start out for California. Both said they wanted to provide for their children, - a noble thought but exceedingly difficult to keep uppermost in mind, once 1,500 miles get in between, - and what was my advice.

Log had thought of giving up his crop now and leaving forthwith, but I advised against that, and the resulting loss, and I suggested they both come back at the beginning of cotton time, and we would talk it over further. Being children of impulse, they will either have left their wives long before the, - or if they haven't, they will probably have forgotten today's intentions. The only point I stressed was that paying for support of their children in Louisiana from earnings they might gain in California was still cheating the children out of their papas, and that they had better think that over a little between now and the next time we took up the matter.

I think they were a little disappointed that I didn't subscribe to their aspirations more enthusiastically. I should like to know what they reported to their wives later in the day. My guess is that Doreatha and Maxine will end up by discovering a "hoo-doo" in me since it seems to me a human failing to always attempt justification of anything by placing whatever fault can be found on an outside bystander.

But the price we must pay for the friendship of two people often includes the loss of one of them, and so I shall note the cost in my mental ledger and proceed from that point.

In today's post came a letter from Paul Veith, suggesting I obtain Dr. Butler's unhurried Years direct from the publishers, and that raises a point about which I wished a confirmation. I have now doubt you are able to receive parcel post as well as first class mail at 1161, but I just wanted to be sure, - when and if the Butler book comes to hand shortly, so that I may send along your copy promptly.

I shall send along the Veith letter in a day or two, after I have answered it. He takes me to task for being a "dog in the manger" by having thus far withheld the Johnson diary from him so he could sell it to L. S. U., the latter institution being engaged in doing an extensive volume or series of volumes on the Diary. It never seems to have occurred to Mr. Veith, - or L. S. U. that somebody else might want to write a book. I think I shall write him I don't mind being called a dog but that his comparison would be fairer if he styled me a sheep which merely wants to nibble at a little of its own hay while the big old L. S. U. bull appears to be under the misunderstanding that all the hay in the world regardless of the harvester and possessor, ought to be sacrificed by the sheep to fatten the University oxen...not me, brother.....

3012

re: Israel Suddath
African House

Must be misbehaving on general principles.

Tuesday, June 15th, 1948.
 I arrived there about 8:45 this morning. I
 imagine when I arrived there about 8:45 this morning. I
 wonderful how even a little rain will perk things up, and what
 emphasizes the beauty of the place. I was in the garden at the
 from the elements. A case in point was a lovely little house which
 memorandum: I was in the garden at the night, and a fat and
 happily. I was in the garden at the night, and a fat and
 How sweet at the end of a long, hot day to have this little
 hour of relaxation and communion with you.

I've now sent along the printed Talking Books - Topics which arrived today along with the recorded version. Assuming the printed copy to contain what the recorded one does, I may hasten to say that there isn't much in this issue to bother with, save possibly the brief account at the beginning regarding Wila Cather's long aversion to having her novels recorded.

In the recorded version, too, there is reference to somebody who objected to "Daisy Kenyon" or some such title, saying the book was so filthy she was ashamed to let anyone know she had read it. Other users of Talking Books were asked to register their opinions. I responded immediately, saying I had never read the book and knew nothing about it, but regardless of its content, I was all against "putting pants on the canary" and expressed the belief that one of the great things about Talking Books is the fact that they are not abridged or subjected to kindergarten tactics by anybody who would diminish what he or she thinks we ought to have.

I did have one other bit of advice from my mother's death, which was that at the moment I would certainly read it, that I have no more new books to save, "Wane's House," which I still probably read for lack of something new. I am losing number of contributors around the other day, our aiming a million records more or less, covering "Ten Christies"; but without having any particular reason, I don't seem to be able to undertake that one during the current season.

A few times in my life I have had a go at that work, but somehow I never could quite make it. It is somehow falls into that category of the penitential. Under it is historical novels, and which I never seem able to master as well as I do. I have heard that you turn the page. I said and said and said a 'mighty end ying son too

For the first time since December of 1941, I had a swell on
little River this afternoon. There are buildings across from the bridge
out yonder, and the new telephone exchange is in this building. There
were perhaps 8 or 10 engineers, as many workmen, and much
mechanical pile drivers and what not, but I saw none of the
large limousines that even now come to see the bridge.
Christmas time, and except for the annual "Christmas" party
which my wife and I went to eight days later, I had
well, I declare, it looks as though Mr. I. Brown has
slipped up on his job of changing typewriter ribbons, or else

3108

3013

this machine must be mis-behaving on general principals.

Everything at Arenbourg was as delicious as you could imagine when I arrived there about 4:45 this morning. It is wonderful how even a little rain will perk things up, and what impulses blossom into flower at the vaguest gesture of cooperation from the elements. A case in point was a lovely Lowell Thomas which had opened wide-wide during the night, and a fat bud which had burst the green gloves that enclosed it yesterday. Naturally I brought them both home with me and they are nodding faintly here on my desk before me.

The magnolias, - grandiflora, which got off at such a wonderful start, gradually ceased unfolding their new growth (growth) when the heat got so intense, but yesterday's sprinkling seems to have given them a decided impetus, and before 8 o'clock they were already beginning to unfold. Let's hold the thought that they are going to make it.

Archilius Brown came by this morning for a little chat with me. He is in his 70's and wanted to talk about the old days, as revealed to him by Aunt Jane and Uncle Israel Southern, - the two old slaves who in their last years lived and died in the from from which I write.

Archilius asked me to walk over to the African House with him, and there he showed me where Uncle Israel had pointed out the stocks that used to be housed on the upper floor of that building. According to Uncle Israel, a slave, - slated for punishment, was placed flat on the floor, his wrists and neck held down by a form fitting over them. A similar grooved pair of boards were four or five feet beyond, - designed to be fastened over the ankles, - and this latter form arranged so it could be moved closer or farther away from the neck and wrist forms, - so the whole thing could be adjusted for any lengthed victim.

I am much interested in this arrangement for it is the first time I have ever heard of placing the victim flat on the floor to receive his beating, and off hand, I should imagine he ran less risk of severe injury from the lash, - if that was the instrument used, - than in the usual standing position when the whip frequently cut not only the victim's back but also his chest, stomach, etc.

It was all pretty bad and I remember that old Uncle Israel was lame because of a broken hip which he always said dated from the time Mr. Hyppolite Hertzog kicked him when he was down.

But pilgrims came before Archilius and I had half finished our business, and I shall see him again for another tour before very long. I remember the Madam used to talk about the stocks that were here when she came to "elrose, but she couldn't remember what had happened to them. Archilius pointed out one of the rings in the wall, - and I shall preserve that.

Well, this is a dour note to end our little chat on, but perhaps I shall space my random thoughts better on the morrow. And so goodnight and again my thanks for this happy hour of communion...

Bulla letter 58

3014

3108

Wednesday, June 16th, 1948. I am so glad to hear from you and to hear that you are well and happy.

Memorandum: I am so glad to hear from you and to hear that you are well and happy.

What a delightful surprise to have your Saturday letter in this morning's post. Somehow I had expected your week end would be ever so busy and a little note might be heading my way following your receipt of my first letter, following the interlude, which I hope reached you on Monday.

It is so thoughtful of you to share with me those day-to-day details such as your conference at 8:10, the subsequent one at 8:55, the object of your busy morning at home on Saturday, your speculations as to what people think is important in the spending of money, etc., etc., for it is in the sharing of these details and our own expressions of feelings and impulses in such matters that lends such a lovely design to the pattern of life for tomorrow, and by the mention of these day-to-day aspects of daily episodes, we are so much the better able to appreciate the little designs, sometimes seemingly so insignificant when jotted down, but looming so large when later the whole spread of characters and characteristics become more enveloping and embracing.

Without knowing anything about it, I have a feeling that your conference at 8:10 was very worth while, for it not only indicates to 595 that you know the way uptown, but it also renews the impression of your personality on up-town so that you will be the more familiarly fixed in the memory of that locality, should circumstances ever come that you travel in that direction again.

In reference to the other matter, - the surprising racket that flares over packages, etc., it is a pity that so many family circles seem doomed to such imperfections. We have one in Dan, and while it is terribly annoying, it never fails to fascinate me, too, for I am always curious to see the thing in operation and to speculate why it operates as it does.

Much of it is based on pure selfishness, I think, with quite a measure of arrogance stirred in, plus quite a dash of inferiority that is recognized but frantically and ruthlessly denied by the possessor to himself, hoping that others who might, who possibly do, recognize it, may be cowed into disregarding it by the infernal noise made by their loudish braying, or their suppur reserve that is supposed to freeze if the noise horns don't succeed in drowning out the weaknesses.

Often such people, I think, are extroverts, pretty well adjusted to their day to day existence. Thank the Lord we were given compensations, - we introverts, by being able to see today lasts but from sun up to sun down, and that a whole world of

4108

3015

yesterdays and tomorrows are ours, - and quite apart but in addition to that single day that seems to satisfy so much and yet offer so little to those who claim to be perfectly adjusted to it.

And speaking of yesterdays and tomorrows, you were so good as to send some clippings from Argosy's catalogue, and to inquire if we receive announcements from that house. We do. But my patient has moved beyond much ability to read the listings comprehensively to herself, - let alone me, for I never hear of such particulars.

The Louisiana map sounds very interesting. I do not know of it. It probably indicates the Feliciana Railroad, running from Woodville, Miss. to Bayou Sara, - probably the most interesting early railroad in America. You may recall there was much in that manuscript Dora and I worked on that centered around this particular line.

As for John Westley Monette's History of the Miss. Valley, we have a first edition, and as it was present to me some time back to go with other Mississippi items, I assume I may be able to retain it. It is housed with my other items on Miss., and I propose to add it to our Arenbourg library eventually.

Everyone has always declared it to be a wonderful book, although I have never heard of anyone who read a line in it and never have I been able to get anybody to read a page to me from this so-called remarkable two volume work. Eventually we shall have to explore a page or two and see what it really is like.

Dr. Monette, as you know, was a contemporary and neighbor of B. L. G. Waller at Washington, Miss., and the back of his "Sweet Auburn" Plantation, - not to be confused with the Auburn in Natchez, - adjoins the graveyard on Meade Villa where Mrs. Randen presented me with burying space. Dr. Monette, - let me see, Mr.

Gerard Brandon, so frequently mentioned by Miss Nellie, is a grandson of Dr. Monette. Dr. George Monette, one of the old Dr.'s sons, courted Miss Nellie during her girlhood at Pennsylvania. I have quite a few stories about the Monettes, all of whom were remarkably brainy or a little bit off.

Eventually we shall go and look at Sweet Auburn, a rather modest plantation home, with delicious little brick buildings detached from the main house to the right and left as one enters the garden before the house. One of these little brick buildings was Dr. Monette's library and the other his office. I have always felt a detached library quite charming, and especially for a plantation I have a fairly good description of Sweet Auburn pasted in the Hist. of the Miss. Valley, taken from one of the Pink Papers, as I recall, - and if memory serves, I did quite a few paragraphs on John W. Monette in my chapter on Natchez Doctors, - a manuscript I had forgotten until you mentioned this item. I must look up that business.

Again my thanks for your nice, nice letter. he

5108

3016

Robina 6/16

June 17th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Today's incoming post reminded me of the old Gay 90 song:

"Every day'll be Sunday Bye and Bye".

In other words, the postman again surprised me when he produced your letter of Monday evening. I need not tell you how delighted I am to be re-assured that contact has again been established and the new arrangement began functioning perfectly with the arrival of my first note following the interlude.

Before long you will probably discover some particular time of day, - morning, noon or evening, when it will be most convenient for you to consult 1161, and when this route gets under way, it will be pleasant to have in mind when you are effecting these daily little chats.

How nicely we could use some of the unnecessary dampness you have been experiencing during May and June, for it continues real dry. We were certainly lucky to have the little slice of moisture on Monday, for it will hold over many of our little Arenbourg friends that otherwise might have given up the ghost before the next drizzle shows up. Up to the present writing, our little grandifloras, although not progressing much under such terrific heat, are thus far holding their own, I believe, but I'm beginning to have doubts about our lovely white Chinese magnolia, for it looks like a deplumed chicken. But I shall continue dodging it and perhaps it may survive.

The pears and mimosa continue to flourish with the greatest abandon and I believe most all of the crepe myrtles set out during the winter are making a good go of it, - with but few exceptions.

I think the latest shipment of Lowell Thomas roses arrived too late, for they don't show much signs of life. I am convinced that Wayside, the Ohio house, sent them from their cold storage, and the temperature change from 20 degrees to 125 is undoubtedly too violent. Next winter I shall specify that shipment of this type of plant be made in February or not at all. The present ones were ordered three months ago, and probably would have found the transition within their stride, had the order been ~~filled~~ filled promptly.

Today was Knipmeyer Day and the doctor came by himself, his wife remaining at home to take care of the grandchild whose G. I. father is in U. S. U. and whose mother is acting as Secretary to one of the State Representatives while that branch of government functions at Baton Rouge during the 60 days as from May 11 1

3017

A couple of days after Earle Long was inaugurated Governor in May, Senator Overton died, thus calling for an election for U. S. Senator this autumn. When Gov. Long announced that his nephew, - Huey's son, Russel Long, would run for the Senatorial seat, it was taken as a matter of course by everyone that he Long could fail to win any election, what with the tide of popularity running so strong for anything pertaining to the Longs.

But what with all the new taxes the Governor has imposed through his Legislature, plus the vindictive legislation he has dished out to New Orleans, it appears the Governor has pretty well succeeded in alienating everyone, - even his hill billy supporters. Dr. Knipmayer, who sees lots of the latter in his daily jaunts about the Parish, says that even the staunchest supports of Mr. Long, prior to his inaugural, are now his mortal enemies. Perhaps there is some reason for Earle's brother, Julius, to tell J. H. that it won't be a surprise to anyone if somebody gets rid of Earle by means not unlike that used in riding the State of Huey.

On Tuesday night, - "Studio One, Hollywood", I heard the hour presentation of "Hardy's Return of the Native, which I thought very well done. I was so glad to note that they put the 99 million people, said to be listening, straight, when at the outset of the piece, one character remarked that being a redolman presupposed that the red dye used in the tanning of sheep skins, would be apparent to one of the characters. I read the whole book without knowing what a redolman might be. - even though I consulted a Webster's Dictionary which made everything perfectly clear by explaining that a redolman was one who sold redole, while redole, - I don't know how it is spelled, - was said to be a product sold by a redolman, which can be exceeded only by the Garnier Dictionary, - French-English which states that cafe-au-lait is coffee without cream, which, although perfectly maddening, is quite true, even though the explanation probably suggests cafe noir more than coffees with milk.

Well, Lord so things turn, and I pass along another item in today's post, having to do with the sisters Mormon. I might point out that the Lafayette referred to in this letter is perhaps 150 or 200 miles Southwest of Briarwood, in quite the opposite direction from Alabama, which is perhaps suggested in the enclosure. - I don't recall for certain.

Our dawn to dusk program was much as usual, but the heat didn't stave off all the pilgrims, for one or two more courageous ones passed this way. One's name was Hadrat, which I thought quite odd - Much more to gossip about, but will save whatever there is until another sitting. I'm so glad there is a 1161....

2010

3018

have teased him to the store once or twice, and he says it's a
one little **Friday, June 10th., 1948** wanted to bring it to show
me, but were afraid the Madam might see them pass through the
Gardens and so by some means discover that there is a baby in the house.
They offered to bring the child by some night after
dark, but I declined the wife's, promising to pass by their
house some time I figure I have enough traffic after sundown when
Gentlemen of color pass this way when troubled by shoe recommenda-
tions to be discussed and corrected or doctors recommended.
Memorandum: Peter's birthday. He is 22. But from the general blow
down in human activity, one would think it was everybody's birthday.

of the slow-down stems from two causes, tomorrow being the 19th and cause for general celebration without the darkies knowing why, everyone is tending to dream of tonight's frolics and so indulge in a bit of anticipatory day dreaming. Half the plantation didn't work any this afternoon, and those who did, took it leisurely, and quite well before sundown. And the secondary cause of the slow motion is the heat which remains intense. I suppose the thermometer had gone down 20 or 30 degrees by 10:30 last night, but even so, it still stood at 87. Knowing nothing about the methods of preserving meat in such heat, I should imagine today would be among the season's worst to slaughter an animal, - especially as none of the darkies have ice, but Aurellia tells me the temperature doesn't matter, and accordingly, she hurried off down the road about 4 p.m., intent on having someone kill her calf for her. J. H. had told her this morning he could sell it for her, being able to guarantee her from \$80.00 to \$100.00 with which she could buy all the meat she would need for a time. But Aurellia thought she would do better by converting the calf into meat at home, salting down what she needed and selling the rest to friends and neighbors.

Eugene, the clerk, and Taddy, the assistant overseer, both remarked to me that Aurelia was certainly stubborn, once she gets an idea. They are right, of course, and without that stubbornness, probably one might do it, and possibly two "n"s, - but without that quality, I suppose she would never have mothered her mother, Bessie and the baby through all their several trials and tribulations. Before leaving for home, Aurelia sought me out to ask me what I thought the Madam would like best as a present, as the liver or a roast. I voted on a piece of liver. She told me she was fixing to bring me a piece of round steak which she planned to take to Miss Celeste to put through a meat chopper to make chopped steak for me. I asked her to sell my piece for me, and we would put the money aside and buy the baby a hair out with it. She thought that was funny but said Mama wouldn't ever let Bessie have the baby's hair out before next year. With nights such as we are having, that baby must be wishing he and not the calf might be tapped on the cranium.

come to think of it, it does seem odd that I have never laid eyes on this much discussed child. A

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have teated him to the store once or twice, and J. H. says it's a cute little number. The two girls wanted to bring it to show me, but were afraid the Madam might see them pass through the gardens and so by some means discover that there is a baby in the Bynog cabin. They offered to bring the child by some night after dark, but I declined the privilege, promising to pass by their house some time I figure I have enough traffic after sundown when gentlemen of color pass this way when troubled by shootings, stabbings, illnesses to be discussed and corrections or doctors recommended, without taking on any visits by the ladies, even to view their proud albeit illegitimate offspring.

Proud and ultra respectable mulatto ladies used to resort to all kinds of invitations to get Dora and me to honor them by stopping at their homes when we would be heading for Clemence's cabin to look over her paintings and to chat for an hour or so with her. The mulatto ladies were frankly puzzled and non-plussed by the fact that white gentlemen would actually pass up their hospitality for old black Clemence as the more vindictive would dub her. Sometimes I wonder if Aurelia thinks it odd that once in a blue moon I still get down to see Clemence but haven't yet passed by to admire Bessie's pride and joy. The real truth is that if I do stir myself sufficiently at night to make a call, I prefer to pass by the cabin of a negro where laughter is easy and personality is high, all of which sounds pretty selfish, and it is good I mention it, I guess, for it might impell me toward charity one of these evenings.

I feel rather noble in another direction, however, and that is because I forced myself to read a few chapters of Jean Christoph, - just to be sure. It certainly is well written, but I continue to wait for items I have on order, and when they come, poor Jean will be shipped back to New Orleans without me ever having rounded out his story.

Celeste and Madam Regard took off today for South Louisiana, and will be gone for five or six days. They remind me of the Cajun youth of the bayou country who on being asked what he liked best in the world declared: "Me, I likes to 'bread' in any place beyond the portals of one's own garden being 'bread' in that region.

A letter today from little Miss Alberta, reporting she has arrived at New Hope, Pa., finds the place to her liking, and is determined to paint only in bright colors from now until July 1st, when she will pass through Ohio, and thence back home. Every year she follows the instructions of a new master, seemingly able to incorporate all his theories into her efforts without ever dropping a y of the many fore-going seasons of instructions by various and sundry "experts".

At Arenbourg, I may tell you, the crepe myrtles are beginning to bloom quite gaily, - small blossoms, of course, because the plants are small, but bloom they do, - and that's a pleasant promise, don't you think....

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had gone to the store and while she was gone somebody had killed her baby like the cow's baby. Saturday, June 19th, 1949.

Memorandum;

The postman did right by me this morning, but because of the holiday, my Ethiopian secretary got lost in the big road, and so I shall have the pleasure of playing at patience until the morrow.

I have been sitting on my front gallery alone, - this hot, moon-drenched night. It is wonderful how quickly after first dark a dew forms on the banana leaves, in spite of the unrelenting heat. They are a marvelous silver, and busy as the jet of a half-throated fountain, whispering continuously as one silver drop of dew follows another, stepping down from leaf to leaf.

Aurelia appeared at my door at 6:30 this morning with my breakfast tray. She was filled with the excitement of slaughtering her calf, and greatly rushed to get back home to participate in the selling of the various cuts to those who were planning on picnics today.

Her lack of coherence when pressed for time is unfailing surprising in the number and type of topics she covers in a single breath.

Good morning, Mr. Francois. How are you feeling? I couldn't sleep last night, it was so hot, and all that meat around. You know there was at least a hundred children frolics around in my yard when we killed the beef, splashing water and all kinds of clowning. And me, I couldn't touch the meat after the man had killed it, because just as he cut the calf's neck, and it busted out bleeding, I began to menstrate slap off, and when a lady is menstrating, she can't touch the meat because it will spoil. And I went to get me a Cotex, - I always use Cotex but Attie, her, she uses a rag, but I couldn't find not Cotex because Mama said that when I wasn't home, Bessie uses the Cotex to clean the baby with, and Mama has to always watch and see the Cotex is buried and not burned, because if a lady burns any of her blood in a rag or something like that, then her own blood dries up, and that's what's the matter with Miss Celeste because she always use to have Bessie burn her Cotex when Bessie worked for her.

"And when I seen I couldn't salt down the meat and I told Bessie she would have to do it, well, then the old cow what was the calf's mama, she came out of the pasture, and it was pitiful because it looked like she knowed her calf was killed and she started making a big noise and she got down on her front knees, and Bessie say she couldn't salt the meat because what if

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she had gone to the store and while she was gone somebody had killed her baby like the cow's baby got killed while its mama was in the pasture, and Bessie started to cry and she couldn't do nothing, and Mama, she saw Bessie crying and Mama, she cried, and the children was spilling the water in the yard and folks was coming to buy meat and so after we sold them some, we just put the rest in a wash tub and waited until after the night was gone, and so I got to go now and see if I can find somebody to salt down the meat for us. - and so forth and so on.

And so June 19th unrolled along Cane River.

Very few people put in an appearance at the store, and while there was a small chicken barbecue at Fugabou, - the gathering being small, - not the chickens, I suppose, - everyone else must have hurried away to some shade soaked neck, possibly on Ile Brevelle, or Little River, - or heaven knows where. I passed by Arenbourg a little before first dark, and not even the Melrose Social Club at Alphonse's seemed to attract many customers. Even in the white section, everything operated at reduced speed. There were no pilgrims. Dan Henry was away for the week end. Celeste and Adam Regard were away, too. The Madam had her dinner and supper upstairs, J. H. and I ate downstairs. The last time Celeste was away of the week end, I happened to bump into J. H. on Saturday evening, gathering himself a fine bouquet of cannas and lilies, - and to what point it was none of my business. He volunteered he was taking them to show the Madam. After he had said goodnight to her, he continued gathering a bigger and more impressive bouquet. Tonight I saw him hurrying about among the cannas, but I took care not to bump into him.

I Payne had told me at noon that J. H. would not be here on Sunday and that if anybody wanted anything at the store, he would be here around ten o'clock.

About 6 p.m., I walked over to chat with Dr. Rand and two of his sons at their camp. J. H. saw me heading out, expressed the idea that the long sleeved shirt I had on was too warm, and asked me to stop by his office with him where he brought forth a fine Arrow sport shirt which he invited me to change before proceeding on my way. He wanted me to have one of the colored boys drive me over, but I preferred walking across the cotton fields. I saw J. H. on my return an hour or so later. He was about to get into his car, - in the back of which I glanced at many cannas. He asked me to have a Coca-Cola with him and I did at the garage. As I returned to the garden, I said goodnight to him, wishing him a pleasant evening. Too quickly did he say he would be gone but an hour or so. What he really should have said was a day or so, of course.

It is my custom to skip Saturday memoranda, and this of course proves that I should stick to old established ways.....

3022

Memorandum: To meet minister of aids of an as children, and to see what the 19th lacked in evidence as a holiday, it made up for it in continuity, for today has been as quiet and as lacking in visitors as yesterday, and my secretary never did come up for air, although I learned from Napoleon Bonaparte that Mr. Brew early this morning was combing the highways, looking for the car of his uncle Fugabou, which had somehow been lost during the night, since Fugabou, on awakening at home this morning, declared he could not remember as to where he had left it on Saturday night. Apparently, - for him at least, the 19th was a success.

In Saturday's mail came the second issue of your gift subscription to Life. In the same mail came a letter which recalled the old days when Charles Dana Gibson published quite a different type of magazine but bearing the same title. I recall a cut that usually appeared at the top of its editorial page. It was a white knight, on a white steed, charging with fixed lance at a fleeing black devil, clutching a copy of Life under his arm. Under the picture was this caption: "Where there is life there is hope".

"Where there is life, there is time", might read the new caption. For the letter mentioned above was from Time, and its writer advised me that my subscription of Life was "in the process of being entered", and that I would receive formal notification of the fact shortly, as soon as the act had been accomplished.

I felt like acknowledging the letter by telegram, wishing them luck in their efforts, and reminding them it takes an elephant only seven years to bring forth an offspring, - assuming the mama elephant doesn't forget what she is up to in the interim between the act of conception and the delivery of her child.

But obviously the arrival of the second issue in the subscription in the same mail with the letter from Time, telling me that Life was just in the offing, leads me to conclude that at long last everything is in order and regularity of delivery may be expected from here on out, - and weekly shall I bless you for the pleasures the forth coming copies will afford. J. H. put in an appearance this morning about 11, - and in typical Henry exuberance, presented me with four new summer shirts. They are white and ever so nice, and practically useless to me, since I

3023

have an ample supply of kacki shirts which I much prefer, since white shirts stick out like sore thumbs in this rural setting of greenery. But there are those up and down the river who will be able to glory in them eventually, - as I am supposed to do, and eventually they will serve to better purpose than the original giver suspects.

It's a curious mental twist that seems to operate in the Madam's case and in the merchant-planter. Once they get started in one line, nothing seems to be able to restrain them or divert their tendency to proceed in a certain direction, long after any need for its pursuance has passed. I think I may have cited the case of the cake which once obsessed the Madam, when I used to get three big cakes a day, - on the theory that plenty of pastry would be good for me.

Last Winter butane was piped to this house, - but having been piped in, only a single stove was attached, although at the same time four extra stoves, - in rooms not used during the Winter, at the big house, were installed.

My bath room, - and my hot water, has always been heated from a wood burning stove which performed the double chore with dispatch and to my complete satisfaction. But as from one day this coming week, a butane water heater will take over the work of the wood burning heater, - but no butane heater will be installed, thus leaving me with two water systems in the same bath room, - but no means of heating the room since the wood burning heater cannot be fired up after the water has been disconnected and transferred to the butane system, - and if by this point in the paragraph you haven't lost all sense of what I am driving at, you are better than I am, since I don't seem to make much clarity out of a bender of heating tanks and no means of taking the chill off the place. Of course I shall scurry around and discover an electric heater of some kind long before Winter arrives, but that will in no way explain the gusto with which the Henrys forge ahead when they get something in mind, - regardless of the need or practicality involved.

I have read 2 or 3 of the 12 or 15 volumes of Jean Christophe, and find it a masterpiece, - as a statue is a masterpiece, - marble, to which the sculptor's art, - gives everything except a heart.

which may account for the fact that I never did get very far in. my efforts to read long before this late date.

I dropped by the band camp again this evening, chatting with Mrs. Band for 20 minutes, listening a little while at an elegant slab of cake and grand an equally elegant stein of punch. Her doctor son, Paul Band, returns from New York to Louisiana early in July, - I believe to make his home here. I'm glad because I like him. The bands did much planting this spring about the camp, but everything has died for lack of water, making Arenbourg look ever so fresh and green in contrast.....

3024

June 21st, 1940.

Memorandum: How nice to have your Wednesday letter and a million thanks for all the nice things you have to say, and all the interesting particulars you so thoughtfully pass along to me.

I had not heard of the death of Comte de Noy and of Mrs. Nicholas Murray Butler. Didn't all the latter family withdraw from the earthly scene within a short space of time, - the one from the other, -

Comte de Noy and Nicholas Murray Butler both had types of minds that I admire so much, - that quality of profundity that somehow never got so rarefied that it lost touch with men who, in my opinion, should always remain the common denominator in mental speculation.

It is somehow pleasant to know that it is really the roof of the chapel of Versailles that you see from your window as you gaze toward Hotel Terres. Devotees of the religion of extraversion would not subscribe to such an idea, but for myself, I find life ever so much more delightful if, by mere imagination, once can transport one delicious place a few thousand miles in the flickering of a thought wave, and so find one's self possessed of something ever so desirable right at one's doorstep without any effort at all. I can readily imagine that once glance out of your window and lo! half the 17th and 18th century suddenly unrolls in a flash, and the thought that the proximity of Time and Aspirations are all embodied in that single roof makes every day the happier for all the performance of the past and promise of the future that is wrapped up in that one glance.

I guess the enclosures are of no interest other than I they illustrate minor doings of friends. I should imagine you might toss them into the trash basket without having lost anything.

Sombody sent the Madam a clipping from a Baton Rouge paper, giving some details as to the marriage of her grandson in Germany. I suspect the groom's mother may have had something to do with the business, for the details covered were on the dishy side, - particulars regarding the bride's "Cathedral train" etc. The Madam and I got quite a kick out of this line. The room is also a grandson of Mrs. Cammie Henry of Natchitoches at whose home the late Lyle Saxon wrote many of his most interesting books. - that's certainly going far afield for particulars covering a marriage ceremony taking place in Germany, don't you think?

1808

3025

I dined alone with the merchant-planter yesterday. He spoke of Governor Long and Secretary Fredericks. He said he had been offered any job he wanted, and I believe Chairman of the Board of L. S. U. had been especially recommended. But he had declined considering anything because he says he doesn't want to be in politics, - and, I think, he is somewhat disgusted with Governor Long's stupidity and spite legislation since taking office in mid May, that he would flee from anything suggesting his acceptance of any appointment by the present Governor.

Being a clever man, the merchant-planter, when saying he doesn't want to be in politics, really means that he doesn't want to appear to be in politics, preferring, I am sure, to be the operator of the Marionettes, and therefore unseen by the public which applauds or hisses the play-acting of the toys appearing on the set.

As a matter of fact, the merchant-planter exerts a large influence on political manipulations throughout the State, I believe, and of course the present new bridge and Melrose-Montrose highway are but striking examples of his ability to make the politicians do his bidding. For the Montrose-Melrose road serves but few people aside from the Henrys, - that is, people who can cast a ballot, and naturally the hill-billy politicians, unless under extreme pressure from some quarter, aren't dreaming of building any fine roads and bridges for negroes and mulattoes.

We were laughing at J. H. at dinner today, for as Postmaster of a 3rd rate Post Office, he is scheduled to get an increase of \$495.00 in his yearly salary, thanks to one of the appropriation bills jammed through Congress during the last hours of its final sittings. \$495.00 probably doesn't cover J. H.'s daily winnings or losses at gambling, and this increase in salary to help out the poor underpaid Postmasters falls into a class of hilarities in this particular instance. So whirle the world.

I have explored a little more of Jean Christophe. The humor is charming. The delineation of one's inner most feelings is wonderfully elaborated. Perhaps one thing making the hero seem a little bit like cardboard, however, is the fact that while we have traveled with him pretty constantly from the cradle up to his 17 or 18 year, - and in spite of two love affairs, he doesn't seem to have become sex conscious, as yet. And then there is the unconvincing social doings that seem sufficiently improbable as to make the rest of the piece seem of dubious value, assuming it to be of the same worth as the sections devoted to the episodes when an uncouth youth is permitted to frolic a random with a 15 year old girl in the park of the parental estate, and the same uneducated, uncultivated and unmannered youth is entertained constantly by the ultra refined and elegantly established mother of the young lady, - in company with her daughter, at dinners, etc., - a practice I never head of in Europe or any other place. But

I'm getting to literary, and must stop anyway.....

Dora 3026

Tuesday, June 22nd, 1948.

Memorandum:

And so yesterday was the longest day, and from what little I heard over the radio from Philadelphia convinced me that most of the delegates to the Republican Convention must have thought so, too.

Perhaps the hear the keynote speech, - or speeches last night.

I thought Illinois Governor Green characteristically dull as a key-note, but your friend, little Miss Clare Booth Loose, came over the air waves to far greater advantage.

I disagreed with practically everything she said, and loved listening to the way she said it.

One or two things that struck me with force fell into the speakers' methods of approach and side-step.

For example, it seemed ever so striking that none of the speakers dared to mention F. D. R. by name as they damned "The New Deal of 1933" or Mr. Truman whom they called by name. From this fact, I gather the Republicans are conscious of the fact that F. D. R. is not a person to be maligned in name if they want to be sure not to alienate potential Republican vote ester from the Democratic ranks.

And another thing that struck me in whatever speeches I heard, - and the Green and Loose ones were about all I paid much attention to, - and this is the fact that all through the Republican speeches the general theme bears down forever on economics and never on humanities. Having always stood for the "sanctity of property" and favoritism for entrenched wealth, the leaders of the party, - and people as smart as Miss Loose, ought to realize they would probably be appealing to others beyond the Republican fold, - already saved, - if they would let up a little on the economics tune and devote themselves, - at least with lip service, - to saying something about humanities.

Tonight the prediction is that Governor Dewey will get the nomination and election. That will not disturb me, although I should prefer the Senator from Michigan. But just so long as Mr. Taft or Speaker of the House Martin doesn't get it, I'll rest content.

3027

As we head into this hot dry summer season, it would
be both pleasant and unpleasant to make a little stock-
taking, - don't you love that, - "make a stock-taking", - at
Arenbourg.

I think the lovely white Chinese magnolia is dead. So are
a few of the crepe myrtles and perhaps one or two persimmons.

But as of this date, everything else seems to be doing
alright. Of course the mandarin, which loves shade and dampness,
isn't doing much, - but it is alive, - if not kicking.
I think practically all of the Louisiana Switchcane is dead,
too, but that isn't important, for that can be readily replaced.

Most of the big lilies are doing alright and thus
far the grandiflora magnolias are holding their own. The
pear trees are flourishing and although the young pecan trees aren't
growing any in this heat, - they love plenty of water, still
they are going to make it alright.

The items which are most unpredictable and probably doing
best are the "tiny mimosa", - which are about the most
imposing thing on Arenbourg.

There is something about their foliage and the way
they stretch out their branches that puts me in mind more
of a gibbon than a tree. Curiously enough, the ones that grew
most last year are growing the least this year, - and no two of them
are the same size, although they all started out in their
present location as equals. Some of them have branches at
least ten feet long, stretching out horizontally and at right
angles to the main stem. It is obvious these numbers are
going to make a good go of it, and probably will graduate
into the tree class before any of our other items.

I think there is nothing of particular interest in the
enclosure, but I send it along regardless. A week or
so ago, I think I mentioned something to you about the
individualism of dancing among the negroes along this bend of
Cane River. I never mentioned dancing to Dora, but
here comes a letter having much to do with the subject.
In response to his inquiry about square dancing in this area,
I shall have to report that so far as I know, it has never been
indulged in. If someone would inaugurate it, there might
be great delight in many quarters, but I imagine it probably
would not take on, - first off because of the innate
individualism of the dancer who probably prefers to execute his
steps alone or with a single partner, and secondly, I
imagine too many gay young blades participating in a single
set might incline toward a boisterousness that would perhaps
lead to flying Coca-cola bottles or flashing steel blades, - but
I could be wrong, and I shall do a bit of investigating and
experimenting.....

3028

Wednesday, June 23rd, 1948.
I arrived at the store this morning just as the postman
was driving up from the west, and a colored friend of mine approached
on horseback from Little River to the East.

Memorandum: I arrived at the store this morning just as the postman
was driving up from the west, and a colored friend of mine approached
on horseback from Little River to the East.

While the clerk was sorting the mail, I passed the time
of day with my colored friend, - a man of 35, without much
formal education but passingly interested in news broadcasts.

He asked my opinion on one matter which the Democrats
might enjoy hearing as the move into the Philadelphia being
vacated by the Republicans.

He said, "I heard somebody say on the radio that the Republican
Party is the party of rich folks. Is that true?" "And is
it true, as this man was saying on the radio, that a heap
of those delegates now meeting in Philadelphia is
malted-millionaires?"

I told him I couldn't say for sure, but that according
to my understanding, some of the folks there sure were in favor
of giving themselves a double dip.

And as the clerk handed me my mail, the radio playing hard by
spoke of what a damp morning it was on the Eastern seaboard, and
how the Manhattan rains would probably cause the postponement
of the Joe Louis fight tonight. And it was difficult to
imagine your difficulties with dampness, what with a boiling
sun continuing to shine as mightily as ever in these parts,
and not the slightest hint of anything more than "scattered
showers" which always seem to get scattered so wide that when
then do arrive, they are so thin of content that we aren't much
satisfied.

Well, tonight's radio says that the fight has been definitely
put off until the morrow, and so, God willing, may you all have
ample sunshine on the morrow, and, for "us-es" we should be
perfectly delighted to listen to the championship contest amidst
a downpour of rain from the local heavens.

There was no mail of any interest, silly letters from
one bag or another, thanking me for past courtesies in some field
of other. The enclosure came from Dora with nothing but the

3029

attached note. Mr. Brew struggled to read the printed material, but, like me, he has difficulty with dialect, and so I let the whole thing go after the first couple of lines. When once I was so foolish as to study Chaucer, my instructor was so kind as to tell me that if I would read it aloud, I would probably get more sense out of that ancient Englishman's efforts and I found the suggestion was excellent and the method really worked. Perhaps contemporary negro dialect operates in the same way, but my secretary had difficulty in making a go of it, and I thought the day too hot for a second trial, - what with the youth having been mounted on a tractor all morning, and therefore in slight inclination to attempt anything so rough going as the enclosure.

I took a couple of pictures of the Melrose garage this morning, for that landmark is scheduled to disappear shortly, what with the new Montrose road joining the Bermuda Road at a spot which is precisely in the center of this not to ancient but somewhat familiar building. But characteristically of such undertakings, only half of the building is being torn down today, and the far end of the edifice was set up about half way along the length to enable Napoleon Bonaparte Carter to function at reduced space until the new garage, - across the road, will be ready for occupancy, and the balance of the old building torn down. Up to the present writing, not so much as a precise site has been selected for the new building which certainly sounds like throwing away an old shirt before a new one is to hand.

Celeste and Adam Regard returned last night from South Louisiana, bringing the General's wife with them, - the latter on her way to Shreveport. I didn't see her. I saw the other ladies this morning, and Celeste reported a marvelous frolic, - much dinners, coffees, dancing and heaven knows what all. Poor thing, she is always so happy when little parties are just in the offing, or have just been experienced. As she rattled off the number of old friends she saw and supped with, and the number of men whom she persuaded to dance with her, I was reminded of an occasion when " " happened to blow in from Washington where he had been attending some quite important meetings, - during the war, - and exchanging speculations with some rather worth while people. He hadn't said two sentences, - "I'll admit I was all ears, - when Celeste broke in, saying: "Parties is all I'm interested in, - tell us about the parties you attended, what clothes the ladies wore, how the food was served, etc., ad infinitum, - and naturally, " " said: "Oh, I've got to shave, - and I'll see you at dinner: Francois."

One thing I'll never understand is how so many scatter brain wives get such rich husbands, and so many rich husbands take unto themselves such scatter brain wives....

1808

3030

Thursday, June 24th, 1948.

Memorandum: Now that I think I have had his way, I will say a few words to the ladies. May I tell you that, thirty million times would not suffice to indicate how enchanted I am to have your lovely Sunday letter and all. I suppose one of the most remarkable things in the world is that it's grand old building together, - for that's the only way Arenbourg could ever be worth while, - and it's the mutual effort that brings forth a real soul in its confines, making it a little different from the casual stop in the road, and definitely a little corner where eventually at least a couple of people can find peace and harmony that spells both Contentment and God. Nothing is so grand as being a partner in such a undertaking, and how much more is life worth while, knowing there is the same spirit in the endeavor willing up jointly within the hearts of both partners. Your letter was so redolent with items of interest that I shall get around to mention but one or two at this sitting, - but before concluding the sentence, let me hasten to say that one of the nicest bits of news was the prediction that you and L. J. might make it to the Botanical Gardens for a little outing. Do let me know how things are going with our mutual friend, - I find myself thinking of her so often, naturally, since her nearest friend is so frequently to the fore.

And I hope you found the Botanical Garden collection of roses doing better than the Arenbourg ones, for the unending heat isn't helping ours so much, - especially the latest arrivals, but the ones from last year seem to be growing mightily, and I guess they will make up in part for the others, - if we are destined to lose the Howell Thomases this year. I don't know why it gives me so much pleasure to know your life schedule, but it does, and thanks, too, for telling me about the precise location of 595, for now I have a more or less perfect picture of the scenes you appear in each week day, - and somehow that makes everything seem so much closer. I was certainly glad tonight when the Philadelphia Convention finally made up its mind as to a standard bearer for this year's election, for it was beginning to look as though radio programs had about given up everything save the echoing of all the strange noises issuing from that Cave of the Winds where the delegates have been blowing off steam for what seems like a long time. I guess it doesn't matter much whom the Democrats choose when they

Although J. A. voted for Dewey last time, - as opposed to F. D. R., he didn't seem much pleased at the prospects of having an opportunity to vote for the same candidate this year. If he had had his way, I think, Senator Taft would have received the nomination. When the Bible speaks of the difficulties of a wealthy man getting into Heaven, it seems to be stressing a universal truth, - as potent today as when the Bible was written. I suppose one of the most remarkable things about Mrs. Roosevelt is the fact that in spite of her wealth, she is still able to champion the party that is not so much inclined to spend its time thinking up ways and means of passing out bonuses to the rich. And I was a bit afraid that this was a bad end to my quite innocent and most cheerful visit. I signed a card as I left and was even given a little of the time. My day was fairly busy, what with the butaine people arriving here just after I got back from Arenbourg this morning. They had brought the new water heater, and were bent on setting it up. But before they began, I sent for Puny, who understands plumbing, and I had the other wood heater and tank removed before the butaine ones were erected. Most of the morning I was accordingly as busy as a hen a-settin', what with a crew of gardeners whom I wanted to keep in line in their attack on the bamboo hedge in the white garden, the advent of the Thursday morning medicine, - not to mention the general excitement of the de-stallation and installation in this house. Tonight the local radio weather report stated today has been the hottest, - and I believe it. Not a single inch of rain has fallen since the first of the year. It is only we could get some of that rain which has cancelled the Joe Louis fight a second night, or as it were, a second.

But your letter, like a refresh patch of shade in a scorching plain, brought me so much pleasure at noon day, and how nice of you to share particulars with me regarding the doings of our friends beyond the Rhine. Thank heavens July is most here and that they will then be able to occupy a place of their own. Perhaps that will afford them a greater measure of marital happiness, so doubly important when so many other things beyond the domestic hearth are out of joint. Frankly, I haven't much hope, but let us continue to hold the thought, and the nice thing about life is the fact that miracles do sometimes happen.

I chatted but briefly with Dr. Knipmayer today, and I detached him from the big house a little earlier than usual, since I had Eugenia's mama waiting to consult with him on his way out. He did tell me something over which we both laughed much. One of his customers this morning at the clinic brought their child to him for medicine to keep said child from being constantly crawling under the bed, which the proud parents took to be a form of illness, curable by the good doctor's pills.

Friday, June 25th, 1948.

Except for the glow worms, tangled in the bamboo hedge, there are no stars tonight. There is almost a suggestion of dampness in the air, but I really can't believe it is going to rain.

Alone, I listened to Joe Louis retain his crown all by myself. Ezra, who is the same age, and two or three of the other boys had planned to come by on Wednesday night and then on Thursday night, but some frolic up the road took most of the plantation in the general direction of La Cote Joyeuse. Personally I thought the fight rather on the dull side right up until the Brown Bomber finished the Jersey contender off. Perhaps it was a dull-ish describer of the punch by punch business, and it no way brought to mind a line which I may or may not have mentioned before, - some admonition by some over zealous radio announcer who admittedly is exaggerating a little when he declares that some old transcribed story should be considered by all listeners as the most exciting half hour of their entire week. I didn't think tonight's account of the fight entitled the broadcast to the most exciting half hour in my past week at least.

I had another story to tell you last night that would go along nicely with Dr. Knipmayer's patients who sought some kind of medicine that would cure their baby of crawling under the bed. Aurelia, Bessie and their baby, - and Mattie, the cook, are the only ones appearing in this strange business. Quite casually yesterday morning, Aurelia remarked that she heard my radio playing when she passed the White Garden on her way home from Mattie's around 11 o'clock. She said she and Bessie had tosted the baby the mile or so from home to Mattie long after dark because the baby's head had fallen in and Mattie knew how to suck it out.

Up to that point I could only this of poor Peter Tchaikovski who used to hang on to his chin, while conducting, for fear his head would roll off into the orchestra pit.

Obviously, I needed some enlightenment, and Aurelia was glad to help me on that point.

3033

It seems that every once in a while, - and especially in hot weather, the soft spot on the top of a baby's head seems to sink down a little. You really don't notice it until the baby refuses to nurse. And the reason he won't nurse is because he can't, for his brain, which ought to be up in the top of his head where the soft spot is, has sunk down into his mouth and throat.

Then it is that you have to search out someone like Mattie, - a bundle of superstition, I might add, - for Mattie understands all about how to handle such cases. Accordingly the baby was bundled up by his mother and aunt and brought to Mattie's cabin, where Mattie applied her lips to the soft spot of the child's head and sucked like mad for a while. Then she turned the baby back to its mother who was assured that within an hour or two the baby's ability to nurse would return, and everything would be alright. And so Bessie and Aurelia sat with Mattie until 11 o'clock and then teated the baby back home, and after they got home about an hour, the baby began crying and acting like he was hungry, and so Bessie offered him her nipple, and lo! the baby sucked like mad.

I declare, those niggers are sights, and nothing on earth can shake them from their belief in all such tom-foolery. Naturally I would never try, but occasionally I do ask them if there aren't other methods for breaking such spells as when the baby's brain sinks down into his throat, - and usually I discover there are several different methods, - which I ought to accumulate and pass along to Mr. Knipmayer, just in case he is confronted by some such problem as the one cited above. For your own information, in case the baby's brain sinks down into his throat, and you don't chance to have anyone about who understands the proper way of sucking it back into the top of his head, you may employ a simpler, albeit messier, method. Get a tablespoon of corn meal, a like amount of sugar, just a dash of milk, - sweet if possible, otherwise sour, and two tables spoons of kerosene. Mix this whole mess up together and slap it on the child's soft spot. If you can make the child sit up without touching the mess, it is better, but if the child seems to be determined on being disagreeable and uncooperative, then pit a rag over his head and under his chin, but not for too long so the kerosene won't blister him too much, - and again lo! the brain will mount to his head again, and he will be able to nurse alright.

It's certainly odd that I intended doing another round about Jean Christophe tonight, wherein I intended saying that I guess the reason the book doesn't interest me is because I don't seem to recognize anything I have known before in the main character, - and not understanding or sympathizing particularly with him, I'm rather indifferent. And yet I must confess I don't understand all this hocus-pocus of local "hoo-dee" and curious practices, - and yet, contrary to Jean Christophe, these people and their unpredictable doings seem to fascinate me. Perhaps it resolves itself to - Kelly's remark about no accounting for taste as she kissed the cow.

Rudolph G. W.

3034

Sunday, June 27th, 1892.

Memorandum: A quiet, hot week end, with only a few pilgrims, including the Danish-American, Sandahl, and some other architects, who, as a profession, make quite satisfactory pilgrims, for they usually are genuinely interested in what they come to see.

I understand the Rands were here on the River in force on Saturday and that the Ed Rands and Horce Rands, with wives and offspring will spend the current week. I reckon I might have strolled by last evening or this evening, but I staid home instead, enjoying the cool that comes with a hot bath and sundown when I incline toward practically no raiment and the delights of a busy electric fan.

Puny's visit was prompted by his success in finding a gallon or two of sloes which he picked and brought to me. His proposition was that he would procure the sloes, I would procure the sugar and crock, and together we would make us some wine that would come in handy along about Christmas time. His idea is good, I think, only I am going to keep my bottles separate from his, for something tells me he will be sampling his handiwork long before snow flies.

These are the same sloes from which sloe gin is made, and although I never heard of anyone around here making an beverage out of the things, I can see no reason why a very excellent brew should not be made. The sloes grow on very thorny bushes, not unlike the hawthorn, and are very plentiful in these parts, although the picking of the fruit isn't easy.

Several big old earth jars grace my front gallery, - jars which once impelled one lady pilgrim to remark that the place would be quite pretty if I would only throw away those old things. They are the big old jars that in colonial times were brought in from Spain, filled with olive oil, and preserved by the local Cane River and Mississippi River planters who would sink them into the ground and fill them with river water which would be cooled by the surround earth, and so make excellent drinking water, - in the days prior to 1812 when the first cistern in the South was constructed at Auburn in Natchez.

I figure these old jars ought to make a splendid crock for the brewing of wine, and I shall eventually let you know what a luck we had with our sloe.

The Madam always goes into gales of laughter or is it gales, - when she recalls how Paynie, - of all people, once decided a number

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of years ago to make himself some fine tomatoe wine. He bottled it in a gallon jug before it had finished working, and hid the thing in the dining room of the big house. Not having advertised his handiwork much in advance, - and having himself forgotten the item, the whole household was bowled over one day when the bottle exploded, breaking a large mirror and showering the whole room with some kind of stuff that looked like diluted blood. The servants came a-guppin' - fascinated by the promise of disaster, but scared half out of their wits. I hope my Spanish jar doesn't meet a similar fate, for some of them are pretty good size, and if a large one were to let go, it ought to rock the parish.

As this week end comes to a close, I find myself wondering what you plan for next week, which will be an extra day, what with the 4th coming on Sunday. I hope you can pick off something you really would select as your own choice, which, I imagine, might include quite a bit of lounging and reading and music and so on. However circumstances may stack up in design for a holiday, I certainly hope you get a measure of leisure some place where there is some quiet and restfulness.

Pyrie or somebody says that the Joe Henrys are coming over from Beaumont for the week end. With the Wenks back from Florida, - I suppose, - I think I shall say nothing to them about the impending Beaumont guests, in hopes that they, too, may decide to head down this way. I figure we might as well get the whole business taken care of at a single sitting, and there's always a chance that Sister and Joe may snatch each other bald headed, which would be nice. It is understood the General will also be coming up for the extra day, and so I suppose none of us will be lonely, and all of us will be glad when the 5th dawns and we can get back to normalcy.

It has been a curious day, with brilliant sunshine straight through while thunder has been rolling as constantly as it does in the Catskills when old Tip 'n Winkle gets to bowling. Tonight half the sky is star spangled and the other half deep black in clouds. Perhaps our children at Arenbourg are going to get a little sprinkle before dawn, in which case I shall pull weeds instead of wearing out my spade. The racket of static is so constant that radio listening is impossible, and so I shall read a couple of pages from my Bible and then fold up, holding the thought that a downpour may sweep over the place before 4:30. For want of other fare, I continue to wade through Jean Christophe, but am still puzzled as to why the book never had much popularity, - if indeed, it ever did....

The Madam always goes into the kitchen to get a glass of water. - of all people, one should be a member of the household.

3036

Monday, June 28th, 1948

Memorandum: How nice to have your grand, two page letter in this morning's post. I don't know why I hadn't exactly expected any mail today, and there certainly was no excuse for me to have forgotten that Mr. Bacheler had threatened to honor us, too, and accordingly I got a surprise when I found him this morning at the big house, chatting with the Madam.

By some miracle, I found a quiet hour with my secretary this noon so that I might absorb all the interesting particulars you so generously shared with me. I wasn't quite so lucky tonight in getting unglued from my visitor, and in consequence, I postponed these lines a little later than usual.

I am so glad that the news from Anita is on the brighter side, and may the sun keep bright during this long July which yawns before her in her restricted apartment. Perhaps, if they can make that four weeks' hurdle, things will begin functioning more smoothly domestically from thence forward.

And how nice that you had such a delightful, left-handed letter from Herr Hans, and well can I appreciate his sentiments, since he is not the only one who has felt the glow that permeates one's heart when a soul from afar manifests so many evidences of a greatness and multiplicity of thoughtfulness and generosity for others. I have no doubt of the genuineness of his thanksgiving and his impulse to call you blessed. Amen, - may I add in echo, - and again and forever, Amen.

And while speaking of things European, may I thank you, too, for passing along your impressions of the Invitation's discussion of Voltaire's Louis XIV Siecle. I can readily imagine how jolted you must have felt when the moderator referred to the Sun King as "that Monster". Isn't it odd that a person in such a situation should have so completely failed to appreciate the value of such a unique historical figure. I hope it doesn't strike you as being too far fetch when I tell you that I have often pondered on how much contemporary civilization is indebted to the type of civilization he instituted. Obviously we should not have had much of an 18th century in Europe or America if it had not been for him, and I must confess to you that I never hear Mozart that the thought doesn't course through my brain that if it hadn't been for the exquisite order the 18th Louis established, we should never have had an age which could have brought forth the wonderful creations of little w

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I guess I ran off the track when I got to little Wolfgang,
but I reckon you anticipated the individual and my thought.

And while still abroad, I must merely mention a reference
Mr. Bachelier made today of a lady who used to be on very friendly
terms with his mother. What made this individual interesting was the
fact that as a girl of 12, she was among those who were dragged
into Nantes by the gangsters in control in 1793 who were
herding their victims into the boats and sinking the latter with their
human cargo in the river. By some miracle, a lady in Nantes secured
momentary guardianship or perhaps the custody of the little girl, and
thus was able to save her from the horrible fate that overtook so
many people during those horrible years. I must get more particulars
about this case, for it sounds ever so interesting, and somehow
seems to reach back almost as far as the man I know who knew a man
who was Jefferson's friend.

And just one more reference to Europe: - I know exactly how you
feel about the uncertainty of mail to and from Anita. Every once in
a while I feel an impulse to drop her a little note, and yet as I
place my fingers on the keyboard, I discover they suddenly
stiffen, what with the uncertainty that sweeps over me as I suddenly
realize other eyes than hers may read the lines, eyes that might
inquire as to why I should be writing and what American contacts
may have been maintained since this European one still holds over.
And then, way back in the remote sections of future possibilities,
I consider the possible estrangement of Anita and her husband, and
what references might ultimately be made by the husband to other
people who might be curious, capable not at all of understanding, etc., et
and so of course the note never gets typed, - and then I ask myself, -
and you, - if perhaps I am not being over cautious or perhaps crossing
too many bridges before they are in sight. Well, that's that, and if
you have any definite ideas on the matter you would care to pass
along, I shall be glad to receive them, - and shall probably remain
silent, so far as the other side of the Rhine is concerned, for a
little longer.

I am glad you got to see the Kreutzer Sonata. (interruption)-
the lights just went out. Let me see, - oh, yes, the Sonata.
And I'm glad you mentioned it, I had the good fortune to see a presentation
ever so long ago in Paris, and at the time I thought it quite grand,
although I'm sure by now it would be better placed in a revival
theatre such as the Museum of Modern Art, but since the memory I
have of it is altogether pleasant, I'm sure my pleasure in recalling
it nicely matches your pleasure in having seen it in this more recent
version.

Merciful heavens, how quickly I arrive at the end of the page.
There's a mighty cannonading off in the North and a big wind suggests
something in the offing. Wouldn't it be grand if we should get a
drop or two or rain.....

3038

Tuesday, June 29th, 1948.

Memorandum:

By signs and gestures, the Heavens were most convincing
last night that they were doing their best to give us a
shower. But after all the blowing and pyrotechnic displays,
a thin little drizzle slithered down on this house, but beyond
the White Garden, in the direction of Arenbourg, I couldn't
find any evidence this morning that so much as a drop had
fallen. Perhaps we shall have more luck on the morrow.

The day has been fairly busy, what with Mr. Bachelier arriving
at my house this morning about 5 a.m., and some of the Madam's
relatives arriving from New Roads, La., at 8 a.m. Her brother came up,
and his eldest and unmarried daughter, and his granddaughter, -
the little Wartel girl. And speaking of the latter to the Madam,
her brother told her that Mr. Wartel, - I haven't yet learned the
spelling of that name, - but anyway, the late Mr. W. left scads
of property not only in Louisiana but in the North as well. It
seems he provided a special education fund for his little daughter, -
fourty thousand dollars was the figure, I believe, which really
ought to buy her quite a heap of books, I should imagine.

The little girl is pretty enough, but at 3 years of age seems
to me to be pretty well spoiled, which certainly isn't her fault
but nevertheless regrettable, but perhaps her imposing inheritance,
following the lavish educational expenditures, will soften the
rough landings that usually accompany the aftermath of a spoiled
childhood.

During the morning, Mr. Bachelier and I spent some time
at Arenbourg. He believes the growth which the pears and things
missed because of the dry weather in May and June may make a spurt
upward in July, assuming we get some of the rain which appears to
be concentrating itself exclusively on you. I am hoping the
break may come in time, - not only for the trees already planted,
but even more for the bushes and things I want to plant as soon
as some shade has been developed. It certainly sounds odd to
point out that up to now, my greatest endeavor has been to
"build shade", but that is exactly what it amounts to, and
if the clouds will only cooperate during the next month, we
might well look forward to taking a considerable step forward in
our impending plans for planting.

2802

3039

Both the Stephen Garrets and Mr. Bachelier returned to their respective homes this afternoon, and I hope we shall be able to repair our shattered routine before tomorrow, thus enabling us to get fortified against whatever the week end may bring.

And aside from the guests on this side of the fence, Celeste had half a dozen from somewhere in South Louisiana. I chanced to be on her gallery this morning with Mr. Bachelier when her guests arrived, but with Mr. Bachelier in tow, I beat a hasty retreat, and contrary to Celeste's invitation, we never did make a round to meet her guests. I learned from a servant that Celeste took all her crowd down to Magnolia for a little call sometime during the day, and when she complains of our neglect, I shall lie and say we were unlucky in making our bow when she was at Miss Sally's.

A letter from Miss Robina reports that she had a chat on the telephone with Caroline Dormon's niece who says "Carry Me back to Ole Virginia" were heading back to Briarwood from Alabama yesterday, and Robina opines that we should not be surprised if we learn they are driving to Louisiana by way of Havana or some such, - and, of course, she is perfectly right. It is said that an oil well has been brought in some 50 miles from the Dormons, and that "Ole Virginia" continues to hold the thought, as it were, in the hills behind Derry, - hard by Gorham, another well is said to have been brought in, too, although an 11 thousand foot one, which isn't supposed to be so very exciting. J. H. owns property in that neighborhood, I believe, but of course it is unlikely he will admit any enthusiasm over the possibilities. I learned today the Texas Company recently leased 500 acres below Cloutierville in which J. H. is interested, paying three dollars per year per acre for the lease. I believe I said 500 acres, but should have said five thousand, - but that, of course, would be mere chicken feed for "us poor folks".

Along about first dark tonight, Puny tapped at my door. He had a flour sack full of sloes he had picked this afternoon. He washed out a big old olive oil earthen jar, scrubbing it madly with Lux chips and rinsing endlessly. Tomorrow I shall take over the business of making the Christmas wine, but as I am not experienced in such business, the success of my efforts is problematica to say the least. All I am going to do, in fact, is to add sugar to the sloes, and cover the same with cistern (distilled) water, and just let nature take its course. Should I forget to mention my failure and you should have occasion to inquire, you might refer to it as "le vin", - in one word which should slide over my in- different Ethiopian assistant as readily as one, two, three.

And now I shall begin folding, having saved today's copy of Life, received from your true hand, until now. I am so anxious to turn to the Georgia houses you mentioned, and in such a mood sleep will "come down on me" ever so pleasantly, thanks to you.....

1106

Miss Nellie 6/30/48

Wednesday, June 30th, 1948.

Memorandum:
It is always nice hearing from Miss Nellie, and although the present enclosure suggests she is having a somewhat less than festive time of it, still it is reassuring to know she is up to reading and writing.

I can't say if Mr. Brew mis-read one or two sentences in the letter, or if Miss Nellie was distracted at the time she wrote. I certainly, - for example, - didn't know anybody had fixed any income tax up for me in Natchez, and from what was written about Windy Hill Manor, I couldn't figure out if Miss Maude had died recently, - or if Miss Nellie had expressed herself in an unusual and not altogether clear fashion. Perhaps on reading the letter, you will understand it better than I, and will be accordingly able to set me straight on a point or two.
I reckon I feel a little as you did in May after all South America finally pulled out. Slowly I am getting back into my usual routine, but it almost seems as though I had been away and engaged in activities quite different from my usual ones, the little visits of Monday and Tuesday having been so concentrated.
To see J. H. for a few minutes today. He told me Sister had telephoned, saying that Dr. Yaeger had taken, the Cloutierville house. He said she reported that Dr. Yaeger had rented it. Mr. Bachelier told me that Dr. Yaeger told somebody down yonder that he had bought it for nine thousand dollars. Be that as it may, the important thing is that there is to be a doctor in Cloutierville, and that is wonderful, even though he be the only one in a stretch of 60 or 70 miles in a thickly populated area. I'll bet this will make strange and unbelievable reading, should it survive a hundred years or so when people have become sufficiently civilized to permit people to study medicine and so be able to provide themselves with adequate medical attention in communities and areas so far flung as from Alexandria to Natchitoches.
My local grapevine has been functioning a little in the gossip department. There is some kind of a boy-girl business in which Puny's stepson, Bix Six got tangled up with a mulatto girl, daughter of Columbus Monette, said to be a left-handed descendant of the Natchez Monettes. It was some kind of a sex business in a remote graveyard somewhere on Red River, and what makes things hum among the mulattoes is the fact that Bix Six is a black-black negro. Puny didn't mention the matter last night. I shall have to consult my grapevine again for further particulars.

3041

You will be interested to learn that a note came through from Gertrude Roberts Smith today. I didn't hear it read, although I shall acknowledge its receipt, and pass along whatever news strikes me at the time. I believe this is the first news from Ashville we have had since sometime during the Winter. I somehow associate snow with the arrival of the last brief letter. Perhaps within a day or so, I may be able to lay hands on the item, and if so, I shall pass it along. Frankly, I had wondered a little if she might have passed out, but today's letter is evidence enough that she is still up and doing at El Charlotte.

Last night I was too tired to sleep very soundly, and as often happens in such circumstances, I dreamed much. Many elements of the dream were unusually clear, and nearly everything was in color. You and L. J. were occupying apartments in the same proximity as you do now, only the apartments were, of all places, somewhere in the West 90's between West End and Riverside, a district which was one the way down when last I saw it, but which in my dream seemed ever so pleasant. I can't imagine how I contrived to make the floors of the apartments in a lovely dull red tile, but so they were. Everything was so pleasant throughout until the end when Tilloah somehow got into the picture like something out of Herr Himmel's gastropo, whereupon the West 90's dissolved and back to reality. I got up and walked for a little while on the cool of my gallery, banana leaves dripping prettily and a galaxy of stars gleaming pleasantly from a Confederate gray sky. Isn't it odd how that sinister figure is the only one who ever induces a nightmare. Surely Mr. Freud could probably make a lot out of that.

About first dark tonight, I put the finishing touches on my combination of ingredients for my own rendition of the Christmas sloe gin wine. I should have liked to wait for further expert advice as to proportions but as such information did not seem forthcoming, and as the sloes had reached the perfection of their ripening, I thought it high time to be stir myself. Accordingly I dumped 15 pounds of sloes into the Spanish oil jar, followed by 15 pounds of sugar, over which I poured six gallons of cistern water. I laughed to myself at my own ignorance, wondering if these proportions might be inspired so as to turn out a heavenly brew or just one great big mess. Having a little extra sugar on hand, I had to buy but 60 cents worth at the store, and so, if the stuff turns out alright, ten cents a gallon for sloe gin should be bad. - and if the whole thing goes to seed or blows up, I certainly won't have lost much on the investment. I shall of course give Puny half for his contribution of the sloes and his help in preparing the jar and eventually bottling the stuff, assuming it ever gets to that stage. That old expression about a person undertaking something "by main force and awkwardness" fitted me to a T, and about 8 days hence I ought to know for certain if it is really better to be born lucky than with good sense.

Lord, I
Lord, so much more

Helen Baldwin
Apr 9
3042

July 1st, 1948 - Thursday.

Memorandum:
from Madam Baldwin's enclosure, it is well I didn't wait for any recommendations as to the proper way to stir up a mess of home brew. I like her account of the grape juice versus wine business, but I foresee no likelihood of a parallel problem in my own case, since the sloes will be the only attempt I shall make in distilling.

I awakened with a sore throat this morning, - something that is a new experience for me. I gargled a little with salt before going to Trenchburg. I had difficulty in swallowing by noon, but then I recalled that asperin is supposed to be good for such problems, and so I let three dissolve successively in my mouth, - and Lo! after a profound seat, the soreness is all gone and I feel as fit as a fiddle.

I have not been unmindful from day to day of your recent kindness in suggesting that possibly a more powerful reading glass might assist me in some of my finer activities. I have delayed response until now, trying out and trying to analyse what I have at hand in that department. I and I come to the conclusion that the instruments at hand are adequate and probably produce about all I can expect in the present status of the optical department. It is certainly noble and generous of you to be thinking of me always in anticipating everything to make life more worth while, and I am especially touched by your thoughtfulness in this particular instance. Much printed and written material through my eyes looks as if anything might appear to one with perfect vision who might be gazing at an object through a bottle that had for years been scratched and dulled by sands at the bottom of the sea, and while enlarging the objects thus viewed through the glazed glass, they would continue to be lacking in nicety of line and clarity. During the present hot season when one's vigor is lessened by the unusual temperatures, one's ability to see clearly is lessened. Perhaps with the advent of autumn and a return to greater vitality, I shall notice an alteration in my vision, when I shall again examine my magnifying glasses, - and, if I may, - I shall speak to you again on this matter, even at the risk of being wearisome.

3043

I feel very noble in having continued to wade through Jean Christophe, in spite of the fact that I haven't as yet cared if I ever read the next page. I come to this conclusion, now that I am perhaps half way through the book, - the individual pieces of its construction are of such excellence that they demand admiration, but that the whole edifice is of such design and so different from the accepted "orders of architecture" that the thing, - as a piece, - leaves one indifferent to the story, cross with its central character, and full of regret that such excellent ingredients should not have been properly boiled down and attractively and palatably arranged so as to appeal rather than to repulse the reader.

Today, being Knipmayer Day, the jolly doctor passed this way, but could remain but a moment, what with all the patients that were waiting to see him here. I was glad to learn from him that the proud but puzzled parents of the baby patient he had spoken of last week, had brought the baby back to the clinic this morning to report that the pills he had given had cured the child completely of its determination to be always crawling under the bed. He also remarked that the child mother reported on the radio this week is his patient, - the child who was married last year at the mature age of eleven and has recently begotten an offspring, with both mother and child doing fine. The parents are a hill billy couple, living some 40 miles North of Natchitoches.

The doctor said that the Madam and I are invited to Miss Sally's picnic, held on the Hertsog island, July 4th, and asked if we didn't expect to attend. We didn't. It's a lovely place and the food will be mountainous and marvelous, but the people, like Miss Sally, will be kindly but dull, and so we shall be quite content to let Celeste and Juanita, - Joe's wife, - represent us. They love picnics and vibrate perfectly with the people who will be present, and so everyone will be enchanted all the way around.

I can't recall if I have recommended the radio program, - Studio One, that usually appears at 9 o'clock our time, - probably 10 or 11 yours, on Tuesday or Wednesday night. I can't recall which, - Tuesday night I'm sure. It is an hour program, and the things they do are usually very well presented, I think. I usually forget it, and only stumble over the last of it, as I warm up my radio to get the 10 o'clock news. I heard a part of the Arabesque with Marlene Dietrich this week, and a couple of weeks ago, The Return of the Native. Next week they are to do Ragnol's Topaze, I believe.

This week's Life came today, and eventually I'm taking it to bed with me to examine the "Republican Convention, '06 Louis, etc...

3044

Friday, July 2nd, 1948.

Memorandum:

How nice to have your Tuesday letter in this morning's post.

And what a pity you have to keep on having unwanted torrents splashing all over Manhattan while things are folding up their beads and calling it a day for want of water at Melrose. But I guess water wouldn't have helped out much in many instances, for lots of times the heat finishes off plants whose feet may be standing in water. The excessive high readings of last week slipped a little yesterday and we were promised showers for today and tomorrow. Today's never did come, but perhaps tomorrow's downpours will make up for lost time.

I am fascinated by your account of the Bradford map which I do not know. You ask when the Woodville-Bayou Sara railroad was laid down, but I can't recall at the moment, but probably around 1836. I had heard that the Alexandria-Lecompte or Cheneyville road was one of the very early ones, but it had slipped my mind until you mentioned it.

B. L. C. Wailes was associated with the Woodville road about 1839, as I recall, and I believe we have some papers referring to that connection, - I believe he was Treasurer or some such. Just for fun, I shall ask Miss Nellie for the dates of his tenure of office in Woodville when next I write her.

Off hand, I don't recall what place may have been the Capitol of Louisiana in 1836. Possibly the Bradford map indicates that point. As I remember, Donaldsonville was the Capitol in 1836, but it seems to me it was moved the following year. This map will also be interesting in contrast with later ones, for the number of parishes changed greatly in the succeeding years, and it will be entertaining and instructive to get the geographic layout of the State as it appeared about the time the new house at Melrose was being built.

George Lester had a heap of minutes of the Board of Directors of the Feliciana Railroad in his collection, and I suppose these are currently under Essie Mae's wing. I shall eventually borrow some of these. Miss Louisa at the Cottage also has quite a few letters and papers about the road which I have always hoped to borrow. I am always so fearful that Miss Louise will die and her sister from New Orleans will "clean up" the papers by one big bonfire, for her sister has no appreciation at all of such things. Perhaps Miss Louise will let me borrow some of the more impersonal things, although I wouldn't mind getting hold of some of the Mercer letters which I know are unusually interesting.

3045

Thanks to a low ceiling of clouds at sundown, first dark came earlier than usual, perhaps by an hour. And so, after a round at Arenbourg, I followed along the river toward the bridge on quitting my spade. I found Pany sitting in his yard and stopped for a few minutes to chat with him. It was ever so pleasant, a nice cool breeze from off the river, and four of five dozen half grown chicks tanelly jumping up on the rungs of our chairs, a nice fat spotted pig, perhaps a month old, nosing around at my shoes while a mischevous fat duck kept coming up behind the pig and snapping at his curly tale, much to the poor animals annoyance.

Cutting across the cotton patch to the East, I stopped by Paganous for a few minutes, finding him and his family and Yank all sitting on the floor of their front gallery, enjoying the same breeze that had seemed so refreshing to me at Pany's.

I can't imagine why I relate these uninteresting details, except that by doing so, I may give you some notion of the exceedingly rural touches punctuating my days, little contacts with the soil, and children of the soil, which I find ever so pleasant.

I talked with Rosalyn Aswell on the telephone today. She says her husband's new novel is coming out in October. - James Aswell. Three times she told me the title, but each time something like static hit the wire, and so I failed to catch the title. I believe it has something to do with politics, and possibly is laid in the "atchitoches" area. Just after she divorced Melvin Douglas and married Jim, he ran for Congress, - and was defeated. I believe this novel has a rural political flavor and should be timely in its October release. I should imagine. The Madam says that one of the best short stories she ever read was one column long, and written by Jim's pen, while one of the worst full length magazine stories she has read in years came from the same source. If brevity be his forte, then a full length novel doesn't look so promising, but it is difficult to anticipate popularity in such quarters.

With no news from Shreveport or Baton Rouge, I gather Joe and Juanita are the only Henrys who will show up for the week end, - which will suit me alright. I see lights in the direction of the big house, so I assume the Beaumont caravan may have already arrived, - and so begins the prolonged week end.

I think there is nothing of any particular interest in the enclosed letter, which I would ask you to destroy on reading. The writer of that letter did an act of friendship for my patient the other day, and it was heartening that an acknowledgement in the form of merchandise completed the exchange of good will. Things are ever so much more pleasant like that, and I hope they may be maintained. - And again my thanks for your nice nice letter which makes my week end a happy one.....

3046

Sunday, July 4th, 1948.

Memorandum:

It's been a quiet week end and restful for me. May you be able to say as much for your own good self.

The heat continues and although the "atchitoches" paper of Thursday spoke of a million dollar shower in the Parish, we didn't see a cent of it.

Only the Joe Henrys were here, and they made a not a ripple on the surface. Juanita and Celeste are very sympathetic and that made it possible for them to spend Saturday afternoon and evening in town and bridge, while this afternoon they joined the local gentry at the Magnolia picnic. They were very kind in pressing me to join them on the island after my patient had foled up tonight, but I declined. They feel sorry for me because of my isolation and they bemoan the rut into which I have fallen in remaining on the plantation. Curiously enough, I feel sorry for them whenever I think how they appear bound to be scurrying in one direction or another with the only fear possessing their souls--interruption, - fear of finding one's self in the country without any folie in the offing.

The interruption was J. A. asking me to join him in some ice cream.

He told me that in Baton Rouge last night an intruder in the home of the State Welfare Director shot and killed that official when the latter entered his home with his wife. The wife fainted, he said, and the intruder escaped. I believe my friend, Mr. Aycock, who brought me my Reading Machine last year is Assistant Director, and I am wondering if he will now be elevated to first place.

I marvel at the length of time my machine has functioned so smoothly without a y attention. I think it must be about a year and a half, and I must say it has been used with considerable regularity. Perhaps I should pause to knock wood, for I must say the thing is bound to get tired eventually.

On my efforts in digesting Jean Christophe, for example, I have read 125 pages. With each page requiring 15 minutes, I figure the machine ought to be tired of this particular opus and I couldn't blame it if it should start kicking over the traces. Like so many serial form works, this one might well have been

3047

compressed into something like a single volume or two, - instead of the ten or 12 that comprise the original edition. There is a heap of musical speculation and criticism, - pages of it, in this story, which is interesting enough if one wishes to get the author's ideas of what German and French music was all about at the turn of the century, but I scarcely think the author displays much sense of balance when he so heavily over-loads what he is pleased to call a novel with this type of essay.

So near as I can make out, the 4th of July isn't celebrated locally with any enthusiasm among the people of color. Perhaps half a dozen of my friends dropped by to see me at one time or another over the week end, but I heard nothing about plans of picnics or the like. Let me see, Peter passed this way, and Little King, and Dee Dee Boy, Beau back to cut my hair, and Puny to sniff at our brewing sloes. Puny, by the way, found the stuff staid marvelous, although it has been brewing since Thursday, - I guess, possibly Wednesday, and so can't be half done as yet. It is already a pretty, albeit pale, pink, and has an aroma precisely like the sloe gin of professional distillers. It seems that no one in these parts that Puny ever heard of has tried sloes in making wine, and so the whole thing seems doubly wonderful to him. It's my first go at the stuff, too, and no one will be more surprised than I if it turns out drinkable. There were about to be a few pilgrims, what with the Monday holiday for white folks, but I think the heat must be a discouraging factor in road running, for we had comparatively few this week end. About sundown tonight a very nice Dr. and Mrs. Healy of New Orleans passed this way, and I really enjoyed doing a little tour for their benefit. We had a few mutual friends of whom we could chat, and it turned out that Dr. Healy's office in the Maison Blanche building adjoins that of a physician I consulted there along about 1938, which certainly seems ever so long ago.

There was a phrase in Jean Christophe which made me smile and recalled your account of "Invitation to Learning's" account of Louis XIV. I can't quote the phrase exactly but it was to the effect that the chief character's little room in Paris was as stuffy and ill aired as the elegant room in the Chateau of Versailles. Of course one remarkable thing about Louis XIV was his belief in fresh air and his insistence that all his Chateaux be designed to give a maximum of sunshine and ozone, - something quite radically new in European architecture, if one stops to think of the types of ventilation in palaces built prior to his reign. So if a French author should make such a blunder in his history, I suppose we should not be astonished that the invitation people in America could have got off so fast on the wrong foot. And so I must fold, not having heard a single firecracker on this 4th, and may yours have been as peaceful.....

Bachelor 7/1/48

3048

Monday, July 5th, 1948.

Memorandum: If any of the above is to be used, please send it to me by Friday, July 5th, 1948. Your elegant letter of Friday to hand in today's post.

I smile to myself as I think of your vast error, - at the close of the letter, - in referring to it as of little or no value. I fear it is a line you have borrowed from me on occasion. And what makes me envious is the fact that when I point out such obvious evidences of uninteresting material, I really believe what I am saying, and yet here is the proof that I could be wrong, since I have no doubt you feel the truth of the same statement when making it as you did concerning your letter, and yet I must honestly tell you that I found your letter to be of the greatest interest in every line. If I could only persuade myself that I could be equally wrong in appraising my own letters now and then.

I suppose you are wondering what the enclosure is all about. The truth is that I found it in the road just as the car of some Dallas pilgrims drove away today. It wasn't my money, for I had none about my person, and I can only suppose the pilgrims must have dropped it as they got into the car. Be that as it may, the thought came to me that some feathered friend of St. Francois d'Assisi might have dropped it with a view to expecting cooperation from the finder who might forward it along to you, to be applied to a bit of stuffing that might go into some package or other that might be eventually headed out for beyond the Rhine. And so, as a purely sentimental gesture, I pass along the bill to you, and isn't it nice to think that when somebody abroad receives a package sometime, that person will never suspect that a fragment of the contents is nothing more or less than a feather from some unknown far away pigeon. I laugh in my beard when I think of somebody laying down the law as to what packages shall be sent, for it seems to me hilarious that anyone could suppose by dictatorial edict, the wells of human sympathy and charity could be dried up. Before his abdication, I cabled Edward VIII: "More Power To You", - and I repeat the same message to you. Praises be to God that you have someone like L. J. and that I have Lydia Lee, for when missiles that would wound us terribly, - were we alone, just flatten out like flabby pancakes so long as we have a kindred soul with whom we can confide, weep and laugh, sometimes all three at the same moment. Naturally, I am all on your side in the matter of giving a thought to those who are about to beget another little offspring. Wouldn't it be an odd kind of charity if one were to pass by a starving man by saying that some other branch of the family ought to toss him a crust of bread. Oh misere.....

3049

I don't mind telling you I was floored by the news that Rolf is married. I suppose the news is correct, although I must say it is depressing to think, - if it is true, of how poor Madine must feel. How many tragedies transpire before our very eyes, - human, real ones that make the imaginations of novelist look pale and synthetic. You had the last letter I received from Madine, and I guess that was years ago. Now is the time she needs sympathetic friends, I suppose, and yet I wouldn't even be able to guess if she is still at Rheinhold, - or where ever, - even should I feel the impulse to write.

That Rolf should have married seems but secondary in importance, - that is married to another. What slays me is that poor Madine should have had to go through all the emotional rigors of the war, dying a thousand times a day in her heart, I suppose, as things went from bad to worse for the one she loved so much, - and then, after all those years of agony, to be staggered by the loss of the love that had torn her apart for so many trying years. If you ever should chance to bump into her or hear anything about her, I'm sure you will pass along the news.

Aside from pilgrims, we had the Joe Henrys to send on their way back to Beaumont, plus visits from the Hands and from the Worsleys.

It seems the Worsleys came up to spend the week end at Magnolia and attend yesterday's picnic. They came to see me this morning. Mr. Eleanor tells me that Mr. Veith doesn't speak to her any more, but that doesn't worry her so much. She takes up her new duties on Thursday of this week, as head of the Public Health Department for Adams County, Miss., and she will live in Natchez. Don Worsley is leaving New Orleans, and will make Natchez his headquarters, too, devoting himself to the collecting of plantation diaries, etc. I gave them a list of several of my friends in Natchez who can possibly lend them a helping hand, - those who have some power in the local political set up, - people like Roan Byrnes, Sheriff Audley Conner and so on, and remembering Mrs. Brandon's letter about Mrs. Moore's house, I recommended them to Mrs. Moore, too, and I shall write to all these people tonight, - perhaps ten or twelve, - and so their bow in the traces may be made to a little additional satisfaction, - both to them and our friends.

Don seemed quite touched and said in turn he would like to send me a list of whatever stuff he finds, so that I might borrow anything of interest he might discover in the old and rare, which I thought very nice of him.

And so things turn in this department, and just to think of the people who feel sorry for me, sitting way out here behind the bushes, completely out off from the rest of the world. Well, Lord, Lord, Lord, - so long as the postman brings me such sweet letters as he did today, I can relish the country, and even bigger and funnier bushes.....

3050

Dona 7/4/48

3050

Tuesday, July 6th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Showers continue to be scattered about us but, alas! not on us. The thermometer makes a daily climb to 100.

No wonder the darkies say they see no reptiles this year. Last winter's cold and this summer's heat must have finished them off completely. - I hope.

We stewed quietly in our juice today, what with the scarcity of pilgrims and callers. J. H., who, when on the plantation, always has supper with us, but today he had dinner, too, for Celeste and Adam Regard were in New Iberia or some such place, picking up their nephew, - and grandson, who will head out for Louisville with them on Thursday for a couple of weeks.

J. H. didn't have much news but says the members of the Louisiana legislature find themselves in a quandary as to what to do when July 8th arrives. On that day the legislature ends this year's session, and what with all the taxes they have passed and other outrageous laws they have slammed through at Governor Long's whip cracking, they are all afraid to think of returning home to face their irate constituents.

I guess I wrote too many letters before folding up last night, for I seemed so wide awake, I couldn't go to sleep. I accordingly got up again and read some from Jean Christophe and then from my Bible. The latter turned the trick, and I was asleep when I again hit the bed.

In Jean Christophe, I read "Antoinette", which is a volume in itself, - and almost by itself, and might be read by anyone who never intended reading any other part of the work of which it is a part. I think it a depressing story, beautiful y told. Without knowing anything about how the author contrived this endless opus, I suspect he gathered together a heap of odds and ends, stories, essays and so on, which had probably been tossed off from time to time over a period of years, - without any thought of relationship between one piece of writing and another. Then, I suspect, it occurred to him that by chainging some of them just a little inserting the name of his hero once in a while, sprinkling in some appraisals of French and German music, - and Lo! he discovered he had almost unwittingly begotten Jean Christophe. I have made up my mind it isn't to be read as a story but merely as a study of the life and times of French and German

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lovers of music at the turn of the 20th century.

Had I other things to read, I should not find time to wade through this much talked of masterpiece, the whole of which, I reckon, has been read by but few people. I am of that old fashioned school whose members, once they start a book, want to read every word from beginning to end, and, if liked, re-read the thing again and again. Some experts declare this method is a great waste of time and we both know people who can glance at a page, catch the story in a sentence, and so skim on, actually maintaining the thread of the story from beginning to end. That accomplishment has always seemed marvelous to me, - since although I never tried, I know perfectly well I wouldn't be able to do it. But even though I could, I wouldn't want to generally, for if a book is worth reading, I must read all of it, - even though, as in the present instance, much of it has little or nothing to do with the tale. Somehow those who skim through a book merely to catch the story put me in mind of the tourists who, on entering a museum, glance at the room number on entering a salon of painting, and then, walking slowly through the gallery, carefully read from their guide book what pictures hang on these walls, - "just to say we have been there".

I have on occasion gorged myself by glancing a miracle of the pastery cook's Art by glancing through plate glass windows on the Rue de Rivoli, among about Mameplumier's, but I must confess I ended up no fatter for such feasts, and I can't help wondering how much those people take unto themselves who can, - or claim they can, - read "Gone with the Wind" or "Swann's House" at a single sitting.

And that brings up a question I had never thought of before. Admitting that Mr. Moncrieff did well in calling "Du Cote de Chez Swann", - "Swann's Way", I am wondering if that translation had not been made thus, how would I have translated "Du Cote de Chez Swann"? I suppose I would have brought forth some miracle like "On the Swanny Side of the Street, - "which is alright", as the Madam would say, when ever so definitely she means it is quite the opposite.

Well, Lord, I guess this is enough of this tom-foolery, and I apologize for the time I have stolen for such trivia.

From the enclosure, you will note that Vera seems to be in a gay frame of mind. I intended taking down what he had to say about Dr. Butler's book and the name of the Oklahoma City book shop, but I forgot to do so, but will let this letter slide along regardless. Tonight I am sleepy and think I shall fold up forth with, hope nobody discovers need for a doctor or advise to the love-lorne, as the Madam and I are alone on the plantation, and I'm too sleep to satisfy either need.....

3052

Wednesday, July 7th, 1948.

Memorandum:

We continue to sizzle and fry.

A couple of days following receipt of this note, Dr. Butler's Unhappier Years should reach your true hand, as it leaves Melrose by the same post. The Madam is forwarding a copy to Gertrude Roberts Smith also, and she penned a little note in your copy, I believe, so acknowledgement should, of course, be made to her.

Somehow we fell to talking about the appeal a particular book has for such a variety of people. We decided that La Smith would find something of pleasure in it because she was on the staff of Sophie Newcomb College when Dr. Butler was Dean. In your case, the thought struck us that the general subject of plantations means much to you and aside from the historical and cultural attributes of the work, there might be some sense of association that would bring it closer to home to you than to La Smith.

While staying with Dr. Butler at Laurel Hill, or in subsequent correspondence, I think I enumerated many particulars about the place which will re-appear in the volume. Not having read the book, however, I know not if all the architectural features appealing to me, are set down in its pages. The secret staircase, for example, descending from within the armoire in Dr. Mercer's bedroom, following along two sides of the lower story, and coming up again in Cousin Eliza's bedroom. Sometimes I think Dr. Butler doesn't yet know that Wilmer Shields who figures in this volume, was a son of the good doctor and Cousin Eliza.

From the letters of Dr. Mercer to Mrs. Lomax, sent me by the latter's granddaughter, - and not known to Dr. Butler, I gather Dr. Mercer was on the point of proposing marriage to the widow Lomax some five years after Mrs. Mercer's death, when Lo! - little Wilmer unexpectedly made his bow, thus accounting for many seemingly strange maneuvers in the succeeding years, and in part explaining why such ample provision should have been made in Dr. Mercer's 1873 will in which "my friend" Wilmer Shields and Cousin Eliza figured so prominently.

The page dealing with Mr. Cabot might carry a margin notation indicating that gentleman was an artist, and his portrait at Laurel Hill is one made by himself.

3208

3053

The end of the chapter having to do with Captain Farrar, over which a veil is drawn shrouding details of that gentleman's humiliation, it should be noted that the Captain on his death bed had written his daughter, Mrs. Mercer, that he had begotten an out of wed lock daughter in New Orleans, and it is the child, with her mother, whom the Captain asked Dr. and Mrs. Mercer to look after. They did, but that problem was solved shortly afterward when the mother and daughter, having moved to Alabama or Georgia, died a few year's following the Captain's death.

Not having read the whole chapter about Captain Farrar, I know not if Dr. Butler gives much of a description of the man. He was inclined toward gay plumage, such as much embroidery on his vests and lace at the throat and cuffs, and was long remembered by many Adams County aristocrats as having continued to wear knee breeches, silver buckled slippers and a three cornered hat of the 18th century down until his death toward the middle of the 19th. His coach with four or six white horses always made a stir as it darkened the traces on its way to Wachesa and his elegant coach and liveried postillions gave a glittering touch to a countryside that was accustomed to elegance but of a distinctly less florid character.

But these and a hundred other details we can eventually add when we get an opportunity to turn through the volume together, although I suppose I shall get out of hand from time to time before then, and pile up a lot of pieces from the broken mosaic as they drift through my mind. Poor you.

In spite of today's heat, we had pilgrims. One of these was a Madame Vaucherie of Dallas, - strange name, I must say. She had journeyed into the Wachtitoches country to discover the whereabouts of a plantation her grandfather had purchased from the Wiamsleys in 1846. It turned out that it was situated in the Black Lake region, not too far from the Dormon acres. When she told me that her ancestors had come to Louisiana from Washington, Miss., I naturally picked up my ears, and the lady promised me to send what details she has covering their residence in that Watches suburb. It will be nice if she does, for that will give me an opportunity to copy it and send it to Miss "ellie who may want to add it to her Washington data, if she doesn't have it already.

I wonder at the hardihood of some of our children at Arenbourg where, in spite of the heat, some of them seem to be doing alright. I think I mentioned having planted a fine Trumpet Vince there two or three months back. It seems to have found an spot that suits it to a "T", and this morning I discovered the most beautiful spray of great yellow and red striped flowers imaginable. They remind one in shape of a glorified morning glory, and they contrast strikingly with a big old Regal Lily that blooms hard by. There are so many things to talk about in the horticultural department, but I have talked too long for this sitting, and so shall fold forthwith....

3054

3208

Thursday, July 8th, 1948.

Memorandum: Today has been the hottest thus far. It just about flattened out my patient who foled up in mid afternoon, and ate nothing but cracked ice for supper. It probably wont do her much harm and certainly wont add much poundage.

Celeste took off for Louisville and Bardstown around six this morning. J. H. made a round at the house about 9. When he passes this way in the morning, - and Celeste has departed, - one may be sure the mouse is about to play. He said he was going to Shreveport for luncheon and probably would not be back for supper. I'm quite sure. And he wasn't. So far as I know, the Madam and I are alone in our respective residences. I should have said what is left of mine, for about midnight, as of yesterday, something like a shot rang out, and I realized the North side of the building had suddenly settled further. Just so long as the electric wires and the butaine pipes aren't severed I don't particularly mind. Knowing the house has to be put back on a solid foundation, it is strange they will let the thing sag almost to the point of collapse before doing what is inevitable and would be so much easier if undertaken without delay.

Today being Knipmayer Day, I picked up a little but not much gossip. For example, I learned at the 4th of July party on the island at Magnolia, the clergy was represented by four priests and two nuns. Dr. Knipmayer said some of the former went swimming, but neither of the latter did. What do you suppose the fashionable nun would wear as a respectable bathing suit. Somehow I never pictured such a spectacle in my mind prior to this moment.

The doctor said that he had dropped in to see Celine on his way here and found her very poorly, but up and about. He told me on leaving the Adam that he thought Celine was failing very fast and probably wouldn't be here so much longer.

I saw Bill Jones, the successful Cane River planter, at the store today. He told me he hopes to return to Mexico City again this January and February, having so much enjoyed his visit there at the beginning of this year. He admonished me before hand not to laugh at him for doing the same tour over again, but I told him I always favored just that type of thing if one found enchantment in a particular place visited for the first time. After all, I'm not one of those who have to head out for Antarctica just to say I have been there.

1206

3055

With tractor work slowing up in the cotton, - now getting too high to disk without injury to the plants, I am hoping to grab off a tractor for Arenbourg on the morning. I have sent word to Peter and Ezra to pass this way at dawning if not otherwise put into the harness for plantation business, and so I expect one or the other will make it. A thorough-going over of the terrace and the drive in the present drought ought to finish off everything in the grass and weed department for the balance of the summer, - I hope, - and a minimum of seed from grass and weed should be the result of the impending ploughing under.

Puny passed by tonight to sample the sloe brew. It tasted wonderful, but we discovered that we hadn't stirred the thing sufficiently and half the sugar and sloes were caked in on the bottom of the jar. A trip to the bamboo hedge provided a perfect instrument for stirring, and a subsequent sampling of the stuff brought forth much smacking of lips. There is nothing like being satisfied with one's own handiwork, and up to the present writing, we are tickled pink with the progress.

In spite of yesterday's heat, Dr. Rand was at his camp, working on the new house for his speed boat. When Mrs. Rand was here the other day, she made a remark in passing that sounded interesting. In speaking with the Madam she said: "You know, the doctor was delighted with what F. wrote for him regarding the Cane River and its historical development and he was so glad to be able to elaborate on it and use it in his speech before the Historical Society". I wasn't supposed to be listening at the time, for Mrs. Pattison ostensibly had my ear on the other end of the sofa, but I have since wondered to what use was put the Preface to "Leisure". I certainly hope he elaborated a little more correctly than Mr. Rand did with another manuscript.

A note from Sister today promises that the whole family will be down for the week end, - this week or next. That is really something to anticipate, - and not so much their presence as the aftermath of their visit. If they would only go on to Wisconsin and sit on a tack.

Alors, il faut que je fold, a brief glimpse at the Gospel according to St. John and an equally limited one according to St. Romain Rolland, and so to bed.....

1206

3056

Rudolph 7/17/48

about birds (1. 5)

Friday, July 9th, 1948

Memorandum:

This incredible weather continues.

I was all a-drip before arriving at Arenbourg this morning. I was little more than a giddy grease spot when I got back.

Peter brought a tractor with disks attached. Weren't it over the terrace, - up and down and back and forth. It certainly knocked down the weeds but the ground is so thoroughly baked, the disks made little actual impression on the soil itself. But the job was worth while because the weeds thus flattened out were thoroughly scorched by the sun in their recumbent position, and so have probably passed out for the most part, which is precisely what was desired. Assuming it will eventually rain, the ground will be softened up a little, and then we shall put in a big plough, and with the present green stuff turned under, the soil will be enriched, and the seeds, still immature, will not germinate next season.

In the mean time, would attempt to "build shade" goes ahead, although not much is growing in such heat as persists morn arily. But the fact that the things for the most part are surviving, gives promise that when the rains do come, many of our children will jump skyward with "Jack-in-the-Beanstalk" speed, and so, perhaps, in making these anticipatory arrangements, we are not laboring in vain, - I hope.

Today's post was so thin we didn't even get the daily Times Picayune and so my patient and I didn't have to wade through any correspondence. Naturally I was enchanted, since I felt much more like doing nothing than being concerned with a flock of letters, half of which, as so often happens, begins: "Having just read about Melrose in 'plantation parade'....."

Except for a modest go at some chicken gumbo at dinner, I stuck pretty close to liquids during the day, so that by supper time I was well rested and had developed a good appetite. Tomorrow morning I shall take a whack at a few weeds along the edge of the terrace which Peter could catch with his tractor, and after that, - for the week end, both Arenbourg and I shall let Nature rock along under its own steam and both of us will rest.

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It's interesting to notice how our feathered friends re-act to this excessive heat. Their daily schedule starts off normally at first dawn when they start off the day by "tuning up their pipes" followed by flitting about in preparation for their breakfast. The usual routine appears to be maintained up until about 10:30 or 11, when the heat is really turned on. Then one neither hears nor sees any birds at all until about 4 o'clock, when a passing breeze suggests that the thermometer may be making up its mind to move downward a little. Usually the cardinals are the first to break the prolonged mid day silence, the male whistling restrainedly to his mate. Sometimes she is rather slow about awakening from her siesta, but after a few increasing insistent whistles, she responds phlegmatically, and within half an hour or so, a whole chorus of responses add life and gaiety to the foregoing silence. Of course any old time in the day, one may expect to hear a bluejay squawking, but even they, at high noon, somehow appear subdued. It is an interesting fact that the negroes in this region all give unusual status to the bluejay, - something more than usual bird attributes. The general understanding is that every Friday the bluejay flies to Hell where he picks up a grain of salt the Devil is spreading about, and brings it back to to put in the wound, - physical or spiritual, of some human being. I must say the bluejay is a terrible bag among birds, but it seems remarkable in a way that the negroes should have sent him on such a long journey every Friday, sensing apparently, that the evil he does among the feathered citizens of the world, is likely to spread among the human population, too.

The orioles, so busy in May, sprinkling liquid notes among the gardenias and through the iris, must have woven all their tunes into their swinging nests up in the pecane trees, for I seldom hear them in deep summer, and the mocking birds, busy at raising a family, withhold their music at noonday, to spill it a midnight when the moon gets big and golden. And, because one is accustomed to it, all these psalms and silences seem ever so natural, and yet I am curious to know what the birds are really up to during this interludes of quiet, if they really do take little cat naps during the full heat of noon time, or do they continue to go about their business as usual, but merely withhold their musical entertainments until a sinking sun lends more perfect coloring and atmosphere to their symphonic undertakings.

But, Lord, I seem to have gone astray in my speculations, and I must apologize for having gone so far afield. Tonight's radio says that at a Graden party at Buckingham today, it was so cold Queen Elizabeth and many of her ladies appeared in fur coats. Finding yourself somewhere between Melrose and Buckingham, may you find a better balance in the thermometer than you would in either Louisiana or London, but hot or cold as the weather may be, I hope you are taking good care of you,....

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Robina 7/9/48

Sunday, July 11th, 1948.

Memorandum:

May I tell you we had a nice rain today.

But before expatiating on that blessing, perhaps I should say that the reason Saturday's Memorandum is posted with Sunday's on Monday morning is due to the fact that just as I was heading to the Post Office on Saturday morning, Uncle d'Or came to see me, and before he left Beau Mack, the barber and Elam passed this way, and so I was a second late in reaching the departing post.

But let's speak of the grand drink our little friends had at Arenbourg today. Saturday afternoon it pour at Bermuda and in Cloutierville but didn't rain here. But this afternoon a fine shower descended upon us for a good half hour, and tonight there a thin little sprinkle that has been falling for the past hour or so. Surely the afternoon rain loosened up the earth enough to let tonight's sprinkles penetrate, all of which makes me slap happy, for now the children will have an opportunity to make up for lost time, uncurl their parched new growth, - and, if the weather should remain cloudy for a few days, they may even be able to do a little growing, - and isn't that grand.

The Wenks came Saturday evening and announced they were leaving the children. But pressure from two sides convinced them the children had better head back to Shreveport with their parents, - which they did. Thank the Lord. And so tonight, the Madam and I are quite alone, - what with J. H. in San Antonio and Celeste and Madam Regard in Louisville, - and Heaven knows where Dan is.

As usual, I heard little or nothing from the Wenks that was believable or interesting. There was the usual dishing of the Worsleys and the Joe Henrys and so on. I was given to understand they got three thousand dollars out of the Worsleys before the latter turned the Cloutierville property back to them. As the Wenks originally paid fifteen hundred dollars for the place, they aren't loosing on that transactions. And now that they have the property back again, they have rented it to Dr. Yaeger at one hundred dollars per month, - which also isn't bad, - twelve hundred dollars a year income on a fifteen hundred dollar investment which has already netted three thousand dollars before the rental starts.

But enough of such tire some people, and I really didn't intend separating tire and some, but it is alright.

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Saturday was a big day at the store, for everybody in the neighborhood awaited the coming of the Postman who was bringing the first of Governor Long's increased pension checks. And the checks came on schedule, and Celine and Joe Roque, for example, got a forty five dollar check, each, and most of the unmarried pensioners got \$50.00 each, - married couples receiving \$89.00 instead of the \$100.00 which would be theirs were the straight fifty dollars be paid them individually. I shall be interested to see how poor old Celine and Joe will spend their monthly stipend for having lived but a few years lacking a century, I suppose they must be quite used to a much more modest income. I think this new blessing will scarcely make them giddy. After all, Celine and Joe raised 45 children belong to other people during their lean and childless years, so I have no doubt they may well take on an orphanage, what with the present "pennies from heaven".

This morning at ten minutes of five, Puny tapped on my window. He said he thought our home brew was ready for bottling, and he had come early this Sunday morning before the plantation was a-stir in order that we might accomplish our undertakings without assistance or advice from any quarter. We accordingly strained the stuff and put it in 7 gallon bottles, - six, I mean. Puny took two of his home with him and hid the third in the bushes. I put my three in the cool dark fireplace in the West bedroom of this house. The fireplace has a wooden screen fitting tight into the opening, so that my bottles, - if they don't explode, may rest there in a moderate temperature and a dark surrounding until next December. Puny had sampled the stuff before he decided it was time to bottle it, and I took his word for it. I shall sample a glass of it I set aside for future reference, for this morning I didn't feel too expert in such matters, having indulged in some crab meat salad last night that obviously had not set so well. The stuff is very light in appearance, more like a pale pink Sauterne, - if you can imagine such, - than the cherry color I had anticipated. But the taste is the thing, and I shall be able to report on that at my next sitting.

Saturday afternoon, Aurellia got Agabou to take her to Cloutierville where 69 years ago her mother was born and christened in the local Catholic church. Aurellia has to have the baptismal certificate when she applies for old age assistance for her mother. Her father has already secured his certificate from the same organization. But Aurellia struck the place at the wrong time, for even as one or two towns people had warned her, she did in fact find Father Becker drunk, - for at least about as high as a kite, and he told her he wasn't going to bother with her, as he was out for making money and not for giving people such information as she requested. Father Becker is a bag, who not only operates the local church but the local movie as well, not to mention a cotton gin, and of all things, - Father Becker's Fluffer, - of which I believe I have spoken at length before. Oh, Liberty, - and Religion, what bags officiate in Thy name.....

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Monday, July 12th, 1948.

Memorandum:

I'm sleepy tonight, and so I reckon this note may not be worth much.

But I do want to say how over-flowing was my mail today, - two letters, including the 908 card in nice big figures, together with the map which came safely to my true hand.

As you will have already noted, I shall inaugurate the 908 number with this letter. Two letters to 1161 went forward in today's post, but I assume they will automatically find their way into 908. And while on that general subject, may I ask where Grand Central Station of the Post Office is situated. I assume it may be in or near the Grand Central Station itself, although it seems to me there used to be a Grand Central Post Office on Lexington around 46th Street, but the precise name that unit bore has long since eluded me. Where ever the present boxes are located, I do hope you find it easy of access.

How characteristically thoughtful it was of you to let me know I might reserve a part of your longer letter for tomorrow's sitting. I read the 908 one through and a little over half of the four page one, when a series of interruptions took me away from Mr. Brew and eventually the plantation bell took him away from me, - and so I have the double assurance of knowing I may resume tomorrow where the world broke in today, and it is always somehow extra special when one is assured of pleasure on the morrow, even at the expense of regretting a break in today.

I am so interested in how you spent your week end and naturally I am enchanted that you and L. J. had such a splendid opportunity to share a part of the time together. Even though you couldn't make the Crosby picture and were disappointed in the Rivoli rendition of Mr. de Mille's opus, still it was probably enough for you both to have each other and the pleasure of sharing your hours, - inside the house and even as far afield as Central Park Zoo in each other's company. How true is the Madam's old saw: "Only two people can talk", - and how equally true is the same statement for sheer communion of souls. I can well imagine that even though it was ten o'clock before you reach home and alt ough you both were probably quite tired physically, still there was the recompense that is measureless in value when two sympathetic hearts have thus been able to beat in unison for a little while.

I was much interested in what you relate about preparations made for packages abroad, guided by recommendations from Aunt Ella and all. I had no idea that such fore-thought went into such undertakings, - and

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that the preparation might thus bring ever so much additional value of the package's contents to the ultimate recipient.

Naturally I was heartened to learn of the improvement in the case of your out of town visitor, as of Saturday before the 4th, and it must be a great source of gratification to his sister. But how nice all the cigars could head out toward the clam department, for there could they find congeniality and, in going, provide you and L. J. with a grand supply of your own

I have not looked at the Louisiana map as yet, save to examine its condition, which seems to be perfect. I never had a moment alone from noon until after dark tonight, and I shall be able to see so much better in the morning, that I shall have a look-see at it then.

After yesterday's elegant show, Peter passed this way to say he thought a plough would do wonders if we were to put it slap on top the disking we did no Friday. And so at dawn, Peter appeared, and except for a couple hurried trips to Melrose in mid morning, we concentrated on ploughing Arenbourg, - or the better part of it, - for we did Unit No. 2, - which, by the way, we never seem to talk about, and we ploughed up the drive, and all the terrace, except where the magnolias and lilies are growing. Now all the weeds in these enumerated places are definitely under ground, and I think they will grow no seeds, as between now and frost time.

I had a quick hot bath just before dinner, and as the cook was serving the demi-tasse, Paul King, - Mrs. Rand's New York doctor son, arrived at the big house, to invited me to have lunch with his mother and him at the camp. He had been here before, but I had been at Arenbourg, of course. And so I declined, and later in the afternoon, Mrs. Rand and he passed this way again and they told me they had left a message at the store on Saturday afternoon, inviting me to supper with them and some other guests at the camp, but I, of course, had not received the message.

They asked me how the week end turned out in these parts. I told them I thought Sister was circulating the whiskey bottle with some abandon, - not more than she could manage, - but about all. Mrs. Rand told me that when she had seen her at a banquet in the hotel some time back, the line or point alluded to had been exceeded, much to everyone's lack of happiness. As Sister is a liar of the first water, she really quite out-does herself when she gets a couple of additional snorts, and a case in point occurred Sunday morning when she asked me to quit the "adam for a moment in order to advise her on making some "tea", whereupon she emptied what remained in the whiskey bottle in my Coca-Cola glass, and two minutes later, confided to me that just before I came out of the adjoining room, she had seen the cook pour all the whitey left in the bottle into a glass and so disappear down stairs. She apparently forgot in two minutes that she had just given me the last go-round, but it was imperative that she accuse somebody of stealing. What a blag. - I apologize for ending on somebody's note. But I wipe all that away in my mind in thinking of the grand letters

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Bachelier 7/14/48

Tuesday, July 13th, 1948.

Memorandum:

How nice to be able to "continue on" with your elegant letter of yesterday.

Your synopsis and quotations from the book covering the correspondence between Mr. Jefferson and Madame Cosway enchanted me. I had not heard of the volume before and so of course all the circumstances surrounding the compilation of the work were equally new and delightful.

Your quotation from Mr. Jefferson's pen on the subject of Friendship was grand, and somehow perfectly paralleled a similar view point expressed on my Reading Machine last night, - Mr. R. Rolland's main character having just expatiated on the subject after losing his best friend, - a superlative which is scarcely necessary according to the author, what with so few people in this world being blessed with more than one, - if any, - to start with. How lucky are those who can speak of friends in the comparative, not to mention the superlative.

From the enclosure, I take it that Mr. Bachelier has been in correspondence with Dr. Miller. When last he was here, he was greatly concerned about when and if Dr. Miller crossed one or the other branches of the Congo, as the matter was not clear in his mind on reading Jungles "referred". He talked at some length to me on this point, and as I know nothing about the Congo, - or didn't until he had spoken so exhaustively on the subject, - and so I recommended that he write directly to the author.

Mr. Bachelier's surprising acquaintance with such a widely scattered fund of information sometimes reminds me of a conversation in which I was one of several participants. A man at dinner was explaining something about experiences he had had in Egypt and remarked that he had missed the 3:30 train from Cairo by five minutes, - whereupon, to everyone's astonishment, another guest suddenly remarked:

"But if you were but five minutes later than 3:30, you could have caught the train since it doesn't leave the station until 3:37."

The man was floored, - obviously the human time-table had missed his point, but the first speaker remarked that he had no idea that his friend had ever been in Egypt, to which the latter declared he never had, but that he knew all the train schedules out of the city. - wjocj stricl .s as tje jeogjt pf sp,etjmg pr ptjer/

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During a news broadcast tonight, I was somewhat taken a-back when some Louisiana station calmly stated, - and without further elaboration: "Bids have been called for by the Government for Cane River levees and projecting wings."

You could have knocked me down with a fender. I didn't know Cane River had any levees or needed any. And as for wings, I never knew that levees had such things.

When Cane River got out of hand in 1945, it was not for lack of levees, but rather because Red River broke its levees and spilled over into Cane above Bermuda. After all, there might be some need for a sea wall on East River, were that body of water to get out of hand, but I can see no point in building levees on the Bronx River in case the East River did get frisky. Possibly J. H. will be able to tell me something about all this, and when he returns from San Antonio in the next day or so, I shall make inquiry. In the mean time, let us hope some brilliant engineer doesn't have a flight of fancy and decide he would like to give Arenbourg a levee.

And for sheer gossip, I must pass along this bit from up along the Joyeuse Coast. You may recall I mentioned something about the granddaughter of Alphonse Prudhomme who lives on Ty-Po plantation, and was married to one Sam Tobin from whom she was divorced some months ago. Well, my colored grapevine giggled yesterday and told me that while "r. Sam had his children in Shreveport for the day to visit someone, his ex-wife had suddenly married the Lecaze person, - the former overseer with whom Sam caught his wife at dalliance in the Spring.

At supper time tonight, Dan Henry told me that Adam Tobin had married "r. Lecaze, and I registered great surprise. He apparently knows nothing more than the fact that she was married to the overseer, and I, of course, indicated nothing whatsoever from the grapevine department.

I must eventually drop a line to Dora, for I am very bad at correspondence these days. He will be interested to learn that several of his former acquaintances have received their July \$50.00 check from the Federal-State Old Age Fund. I am told from not too reliable a source that Clemence is among those who has received this first of the regular monthly installments, and I know that will make Dora ever so happy. You might skip reference to this matter, - unless referring to Clemence as the Lebrun of color or some such, for my secretary is quite distressed that his grandma is only 63, and therefore is 2 years and 50 dollars behind Clemence.

So many things to talk about, so many things to read jointly. How nice to fold up tonight, with my foremost thought being your reference to the Jefferson-Cosway book one must eventually read in joint conferences on Arenbourg....

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Ann Murphy 7/10/48

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Wednesday, July 14th, 1948.

Memorandum:

The enclosures don't amount to much, but the one does offer a lesson in Geography, - and the other a course in sheer panic.

Mrs. Murphy is the Station Master of Derry, La. A joke that has to be explained is obviously no joke. But you will appreciate my reaction to this note the more when I tell you that the Texas and Pacific Motor Trucks are big old 6 or 10 ton affairs, suitable for hauling a couple of tractors at one go, with a flock of other machinery thrown in for good measure. That Mrs. Murphy should re-route this mammoth common carrier to Melrose for the express purpose of delivering a couple of little kittens to me gives a hint as to the relative places the T and P Railroad and a couple of cats in that lady's mind.

Tonight I tried listening for a little while to the goings on in Philadelphia, but a remark of Elmer Davis or Martin Hegronski the other day somehow so summed up the futility of the Democratic carryings on that even listening to the nonsense seems silly. The remark was that "the Democrats are busy committing hari-kari" - and that about sums up the whole thing, I guess.

I'm glad the Alabama and Mississippi hill billy politicians walked out over the Civil Rights plank. Their ranks may add or subtract from Party weight, but they certainly add no lustre to any organization of which they style themselves a part.

Do you remember some magazine or other that used to print at the beginning of an article how long was required to read it. Well, I got busy and figured out that I have read 24 hours of Jean Christophe, - and am still at it. The latter part of the book is more like what one looks for in a novel or a biography or a study of genius, as I believe this item is supposed to be. I want to bore you a little by explaining why I find myself lacking faith in the character, - or the author, in a variety of instances where the progression doesn't seem to ring true. I shall cite but one.

The German youth, arriving in Paris, has difficulty in ordering food in a restaurant because he has never been to school and speaks no French. A week or so later, he finds a former acquaintance who takes him to have dinner with a group of men who are solely devoted to the Arts, and especially music, - and before the evening is over, the German youth is going into fine details about music with these Parisian devotees of the Muse. Perhaps the author

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should have explained, that the youth took some Berlita lessons from his waiter, - or some such, - so that fussy people like me wouldn't have to bring up this point.

I must cite another case in point. Although reared in a lower middle class family, the youth was pictured as having bad table manners. But as he approaches maturity, he dines with better families and then about the best families, - social and financial, - in the town, - not to mention his nightly appearances as a musician for the Grand Duke, where he may not have dined but certainly was moving with cultivated people. In any event, his dinners with people of cultured continued until he went to Paris, where a friend, inviting him to have lunch on his arrival, - lunch in a restaurant, was ever so humiliated by the youth's artistry in the knife and fork department.

Somehow that sort of stuff doesn't quite jibe, - at least it doesn't for me, and when, as later happens, the youth, after inquiring into the enthusiasms of the extreme Left Labor groups, is frankly astonished to find himself in the forefront of the barricades where all the heaviest fighting his going on in the May Day skirmishes. It passes my credulity to assume that anyone could find himself leading a riot and revolution and not even know he was in the midst of it. But aside from these slips, the rest of it is swell, - not as the study of a genius, perhaps, but swell as Tolstoy is swell in picturing social settings and human emotions.

Arenbourg was grand this morning. I took along the Marly folio to glance through when I got ready to rest a little. But when that time arrived, I was so completely a-drip that I would have soiled each plate, had I started turning them. And so I just sat for a few moments, and then came back here, bringing Marly neatly wrapped up in some nice big cool banana leaves which protected it perfectly.

The sky was cloudy and what with a little of Sunday's moisture still lingering behind, everything has an up-and-pup appearance, while the earth itself is perfect for spading. Up to now it has been too hot and dry for anything to grow much, but if we can get a few more showers like Sunday's, - during the balance of July, - I think all the children will spirt up and away.

It was a quiet Batille Day in these parts, - no fire crackers, not even a tri-colour, was what I was trying to say, but better than such business was the "warm ear" of Mother Nature, and a promise of well being in our kindergarten....

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Miss Nellie

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7/17/48

Thursday, July 15th, 1948.

Memorandum:

What odd creatures we are. How little do we understand the functionings of our mind, for example. How strange that we hear a statement about something of no particular moment, and yet somehow seem quite unable to comprehend the meaning of the words, the sentences, in spite of their utter simplicity.

When I took the mail to the store this morning, a dapper young man greeted me. He said he was Dr. Yager who had retred the Cloutierville property. He said he was waiting to see J. H. on some kind of business or other. J. H. was somewhere in the field. I asked me to wander through the gardens with me and to drop by my house. He did. And we chatted casually and enjoyed the opportunity to get acquainted a little.

Back on the store gallery, I said goodbye, asking him to pass this way again soon. I mentioned that Dr. Worsely and her husband used to pass this way sometimes. I asked him if he knew them.

"No, yes," was his response, - and this is where I failed to click mentally, - "I met them for the first time this morning at Magnolia. You know they are staying with Miss Sally prior to opening an office in Natchitoches where Mr. Worsely is busy looking for a house or an apartment."

Now ain't that a sight. And do you wonder my head went reeling, and even though Dr. Yager's words were perfectly clear, I momentarily made no sense of them at all.

To Dr. Yager I said: "I think I misunderstood you. Did you say the Worsleys were planning to live in Natchitoches, Louisiana or Natchez, Miss."

"But Natchitoches, definitely" came back his answer, - and so I just schiffled back in the direction of the big house to greet the Knipmayers who had just driven in.

What with Dr. Knipmayer being in touch with everything in town, I thought I would sound him out a little. First off I asked his wife if they expected Miss Sally would have other guests at Magnolia today. The answer was negative. Then, to Dr. Knipmayer, I lied, saying that last night I had dreamed Dr. Worsley had just opened an office in town. He said that that was a sure enough dream since the lady doctor had just taken over Adams County and established a home in Natchez. So there you are, and I still don't know who is going around in circles.

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The enclosure from Miss Nellie, as usual, contains a worth while line. Her observation concerning the supposition that progress pre-supposes adventure, is so characteristic. I like to find in such lines from her pen a reappearance of that same gift of expression that so often came to the surface in her grandfather's work.

It is interesting to learn that Mrs. Moore is able to push a pen. Heaven knows I should like to know a heap of details she could tell me about goings-on in Natchez, but if she can write to but one of us, it is ever so much better her letters go to Atlanta, for I am already neglecting my present correspondence too much, and I should be remorseful if letters should come from la Moore and go unanswered.

As I had not expected J. H. back quite so soon, I was surprised to find him chatting with the Madam when I dropped by the big house this morning. I didn't see him again all day. The Madam told me she had understood he was in San Antonio but that he hadn't really hopped over to San Francisco, which may or may not be true. This morning he was searching for a sketch of "elrose" made by Irma Somperysac a couple of decades ago. I think he has in mind to put it on pecan boxes this autumn.

The news of Mr. Pershing's death frankly surprised me for somehow I had forgotten if he were still alive. Perhaps I mentioned in an earlier epistle that it was the duty of the Madam's son, - the General, - when in Washington a number of years ago, to draw up the funeral plans for the former American Commander at a time when his death those several years ago, seemed impending. The General told me that the details of a funeral of such a national figure requires quite a lot of paper work in advance, what branches of service to be represented, and where Guards of Honor will be stationed, and how many will accompany the body from one place to another, the various Governmental departments to be represented, foreign representatives, and so forth and so on. He said that when the whole program had been worked out, - and then not required at the time, it was filed in the War Department, so that it might be brought forth in the future when circumstance required. I suppose that program was brought forth from its pigeon hole, as of today.

In spite of the devastating effects of metropolitan electricity on moonlight, I am hoping you are able to catch a glimpse of this midsummer moon which nightly enfolds us. I'm a little sleepy but I think I shall take a short turn to Arenbourg, lingering just long enough to see how the mimosa look in shadow, and how heavy is the perfume from the regal lilies. It will be nice, the cool breeze from the river, the scent of the newly ploughed terrace, the sounds of the night, - no, I shall not be alone.....

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Dora 7/17/48

Friday, July 16th, 1948.

Memorandum:

And so the lay doctor came to see me.

She said she and her husband had headed thway from Magnolia last week end, but on learning the Wenks were here, - Sister hating her, - she thought it as well to delay her call.

As often occurs in matters of decision, there were several elements bringing about the settlement in Natchitoches instead of Natchez.

In the first place, there was opposition by the Natchez politicians. I take it all of them weren't in Philadelphia at the time, - walking toward Birmingham. It seems the reason for the vacancy in Natchez was based on a report filed with the Miss. Health Service that the Adams County director had resigned. It turned out to be a false rumor. In reality, he was merely in jail, and some of his cronies got him bailed out in time to oppose Dr. Eleanor's candidacy. Other slipshod and heavy drinking members of the Natchez Health Unit fearing their careers might be suddenly terminated if an efficient head were placed in the office, he-sought one of the leading politicians to head off the appointment. This politician is Mr. Abbott whom I have known but not honored for many years. He bought Selma, the early Brandon home out Church Hill way a number of years ago. I may have mentioned the fact that Mary Lambdin and I put in some advise on the restoration of that ancient plan ation home along about 1940 or 1941, although I am not sure you were seeing the Nadine correspondence at the time. I digress in speaking of Mr. Abbott for he is one of those successful little politicians, - I think he is recorder of deeds, or some such, - who by cleverness and pull had done exceptionally well by himself, - mostly within the law. I think. I recall that a law of Mississippi permits one to acquire property if the citizen will pay a small fee on unpaid taxes, - not more than a year or so, I believe, if, by chance, a piece of property should be found to have existed for a certain length of time without any taxes on it having been paid. Mr. Abbott found one such piece of property that somehow had got lost, I believe when Dr. Mercer died, along about 1873. It was located in the Homochitto River section, some 20 miles south of Natchez. The property covered about 850 acres, as I recall. Not a bad acquisition for a couple of hundred dollars in taxes.

Well, said Abbott went before some Natchez board in the Worsley matter and explained or rather asked what in the world would happen if some negro with some social disease should call upon the head of the Natchez Health

office, - assuming the

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to be a lady. It wasn't fair to women that such a thing should happen, - and, it is said, - he pointed out, too, that the lady doctor was not from Mississippi but Massachusetts. Well, however, and albeit, - the up-shot of the whole thing was that the former head of the office, so quickly released from jail, suddenly appeared before the proper authorities, and was re-instated.

Dr. Eleanor, thus freed from Mississippi, thought of Natchitoches. I think she felt her husband was too much under the spell of Mr. Veith, and that New Orleans, accordingly, wouldn't serve so well as a residence, since they had an apartment in the Veith household.

And so after that, and other considerations, Natchitoches was decided upon. Don has taken over the business of finding an office and a home in town. The office has been leased, but the apartment has not, - as yet. Dr. Eleanor says she doesn't want to go into her profession to make money her primary aim. She says \$400.00 a month is rather small but she has no wish to concentrate on \$800.00 a day, the way at least one local physician is doing.

And so there is where the matter stands, and I suppose there will be additional particulars from time to time which I shall report, - if you are interested in following this somewhat extraordinary career. I think Dr. Eleanor is about 30. She has an unusually keen intellect; and realizes that she is stronger than her husband and therefore must make decisions. I think her husband realizes all this, and also realizes that his wife is as crazy about him as he is about her, - and possibly they may eventually get things settled down, although both of them incline toward the temperamental and nervous reaction to each other that may make adjustments difficult, - but at least they are luckier than most young couples, for they seem to have been given a second chance, - and although it may not be profited by in the second instance more than in the first, still there is the chance.

Yesterday and today have been the two hottest of the year. I but a vast cannonading is rolling to the North of us and frequent flashes of lightning keep knocking out the local electric current. Perhaps a shower will be scattered down this way, - I hope, - for although the good effects of Sunday's shower remain in diminishing amounts, still a little extra sprinkle would do "us-es chilluns" no harm.

The enclosures speak for themselves. Eventually you might want to paste Dr. Butler's letter, - or a clipped line of it in your copy of *The Unhurried Years*, since it states the reason for having written it. But perhaps it would be more convenient to do said pasting at a later time, - say on the terrace or some such.....

1708

Brianwood 7/17/48 3070

Sunday, July 18th, 1948.

Memorandum:

A week has closed; a new one unfolds. The worst thing about the one ended is the fact that a couple little mulattoes got over the fence into Arambourg and ruined one of our prize grandifloras to make switches to chastize each other. I could have used them to the same purpose with so much vigor. And the best thing about the new week is that we are together and we have more little grandifloras than last July, which in itself wasn't such a good month.

As for the week end, it was ever so quiet, humid and sunny. On Sunday I actually dined alone. There have been times when, on Sunday, I have practically dined by myself when Dan, laboring under a cloud, wouldn't so much as say Howdy. But today I was alone in body as well as thoughts. Dan was sleeping off a fulsome Saturday night, I suppose, and what with the "cat" still away, J. H. never came home at all. The Madam dines in her upstairs sitting room, and while I might easily break bread with her there, and much to her delight, I imagine, still, I think it better for me to have my dinners and suppers in the dining room, for frequently it happens that J. H. and I dine alone there, and I can transact a heap of business while he is at table that could never be brought forth while he is on the wing, which is about all the rest of the time.

I have but a page or two more of Jean Christophe to read. The last volume of the series is excellent. I travel along with the chief character so readily that I, too, almost picture myself as approaching the end with him. A lot of books may bore one, wear one out, kill one, but it is rare for one to transport the reader along with the main character slap up to the grave.

I wish some artist would do the book over, bringing it down to something the size of a long, one volume novel, so that millions of people who will never undertake the book in its present length, might have the value that would be theirs in assimilating much that is in the latter part of the many volumed piece in its present form.

I thought of Sister in one part where a nasty spoiled boy entertains himself ruthlessly in wrecking his mother's most cherished friendships. And I thought of Lydia when the two people who loved each other most perfectly discovered that neither separation nor time made the slightest impression on their love, which, even though never consummated by marriage, was more perfect than any others either had known. Obviously, any book

0306

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embracing passages to which the reader may add a whole hearted
"Amen", is bound to rank high in his esteem.

Looking back over the Democratic Convention, I find the
line to which I find myself in completest accord was that
voiced by the Mayor of Minneapolis who declared that "it is
time for us to move out of the shadow of States' rights and
into the sunshine of humanity". The more I see and know the
cheap, hill-billy Southern politicians who, under the guise of
States' rights are merely out for lining their own pockets and
those of predatory wealth, - at the expense of the average
citizen, the more I believe States rights have served their
purpose, and the sooner the Birmingham reactionaries are discredited
and shorn of power, the better it will be for everyone.

No mail on Saturday, not even the Times Picayune, and only
a few silly pilgrims so that I have but scant news of the
outside world. I had quite a few local visitors over Saturday
evening and Sunday, - Dee-dee Boy, Elam, Beau Mack, Peter,
Yank, - who tells me Clemence did not get her Old Age papers yet,
and hence not check, - and let me see, who else, - Ezra's boys,
Lee and Bill, who came while their grandpa was here, and
Fugabon and so on. But so little was stirring up and down the
road that about all we did was to re-survey the cotton crop, which
promises to be ever so good, and pecanews which promise to be
a bumper.

I had early flattened out the new Louisiana map on
a reading board on the front gallery where the light was
perfect, expecting Mr. Brew to pass this way to assist me a bit,
but he must have got lost in the prevailing silence, and of all
those enumerated above, not one of them, save Beau, can read,
and Beau was too slap happy to convince me that he would be
entranced to read notations on ante bellum maps.

I did hear one reference, - but indistinctly, - and possibly not
correctly, during the radio reporting of the recent convention.
I got the impression that some commentator, - and for what
reason I can't imagine, said something about Howard Fast being
currently in jail or prison, - something about Communism, if I
recall correctly. I am wondering if you chanced to see
anything along this line. I have enjoyed reading his books on
Washington, Tom Paine, which is probably spelled otherwise,
and Peter Altgeld. There is an element of coarseness running
through his writings that do not add to their merits, in my
opinion, but aside from that, I like the subjects he writes
about and the way he writes.

The enclosure, - Caroline to the Madam, isn't of especial interest
but I send it along regardless. Don't you love the opening
sentence. I responded, addressing the letter to Virginia, saying
Dear Virginia, Make Caroline sit on a tack.....

8506

3072

Monday, July 19th, 1948.

Memorandum:

I am delighted to have your letter of the 11th, or rather
of the 14th, and to learn that you had such a pleasant week end.

I am always so glad when you can get into the country and
on arriving, find it possible to occupy a hammock in the open air,
and relax generally.

It always makes me feel so much more harmoniously in tune
with God and Nature when there is no cement pavement insulating
me from Mother Earth that I instinctively rejoice with you when
you have a similar opportunity, albeit rare.

I am glad the 908 has begun functioning satisfactorily and
that the package came safely to hand. It was kind of you to
acquaint me with the dedication, and I think you are wonderful
to have deciphered it, for from here and there I learn it is
usually almost impossible to make out the lady's handwriting
in these latter days.

You mention the Jefferson-Cowley correspondence again, and
I am enchanted at the prospect of learning more about it. And
the fact that you took it with you to Greenwood rouses specula-
tion in my mind as to how few people I know who ever take a book
with them when going to the country. I recall so vividly how I
was forever taking one with me when going into the country, -
whether for a few hours or a few weeks. And yet I must say
I never knew but few people who seemed moved in the same way. Finally
I came to the conclusion that more people who don't read go to camps
than those who do. And the majority of camp-goers never read
anything at home and so never take a book with them, naturally,
when going into the country.

Dr. Rand is ever so much interested in books but is
always so busy when on Cane River that he never brings a book with
him. Mrs. Rand and their several grown up children never crack a
book, I imagine, and so the whole posse usually arrives, an over-
burdened caravan, loaded down with grand things to eat for
the body and nothing at all for the spirit. It is good for
them to devote themselves to water sports, speed boating, etc., when
here, and yet I marvel at their lack of desire to make themselves
comfortable now and then on their nice breezeway, where they might
so readily relax and drink in the 18th century charm of the landscape
while sandwiching in an occasional paragraph between glimpses at
their surroundings. I suppose it was such circumstances that

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made 18th century chateau life so delightful in Europe, for then it was that people cultivated both their minds and their gardens concurrently, and so profited by a double dividend.

The fashion for relishing literature in solitude is probably as old as literature itself. It always seemed to me that the Emperor Tiberius must have been particularly appreciative of this when he built his famous ivory-shelved library on the Isle of Capri, and Louis XIV was certainly wedded to civilization to Nature when he laid out his delicious Trianon and Marly. Somewhere or other, - perhaps in St. Amand's Last Years of Louis XV, there is a perfectly delightful account of country life at his country seat in the Loire neighborhood, - at Chanteloup where boiseries and beans, marbles and melons, not to mention civilized society in open air, were so delightfully united. I am enchanted you could take a book to Greenwood.

Burr's friend, Blemmerhasset in his gracious library on his wilderness island in the Ohio, Jefferson in his a-top his little Mountain; Lydia Lee, eventually at Arenbourg, - they are all in the same direction and fill me with infinite pleasure in mere contemplation.

As frequently happens on the home front, I make my little journey to Arenbourg and back, - early-early, - without seeing a soul, so that Aurellia, toasting my breakfast, is the first person I contact. I can always tell when she is on the point of exploding in her desire to tell me something. Even as this morning, she always knocks with inordinate vigor. This time, - as so often, it was all about the baby. "Mama and Bessie, they say if the baby die he sure will have a hard time, because God won't have nothin' to do with him because he ain't christened, - etc, etc, ad infinitum".

My opinion was asked. I replied that since Aurellia had undoubtedly already settled it, what was the plan. It seems the child will be baptized a Catholic on Sunday next at St. Augustin's with August Rachel, a fine mulatto boy, and "Bat Mat" Conday's daughter, a fine mulatto girl, - both fines being Aurellias, - these two standing as sponsors. It seems Aurellias papa and mama were both baptized into the Catholic Church in Cloutierville, so it seems better their grandchild should be ushered into the same faith, although neither grandpa nor grandma, - to say nothing of their offspring, - have been to Church in the last 50 years. Heaven alone knows how the unimaginative priests will up-set Aurellia's applecart on Sunday, especially as Bessie isn't sure about the name of the child's papa, - if it be a white man or a colored gentleman. But Aurellia hopes to get the good deed done in fashionable mulatto St. Augustin's on Cane River, for otherwise she might have to toat the child to St. Mary's-on-the-Bayou, which isn't half so chic. What a heap of hocus-pocus about preparations, passing as religious, but basically moved by sheer desire for a respectable frolic.

3074

Tuesday, July 20th, 1948.

Memorandum: From the enclosure, you will notice your friend, Gertrude Roberts Smith, has been on a frolic, and appears to find the play not quite worth the candle.

But I send the letter along not on that account, but because I thought you might be interested in her reaction to The Unhurried Years. In a way, I wish Dr. Butler might read some of her sentences, for I'm sure he would be pleased to learn his brain-child has afforded G. R. S. so much delight.

We were men without women at dinner today, and frequently I found my thoughts turning in your direction and wishing you were present, not only to lend grace to the board, but also to enjoy Dr. Crane, head of some section or other, in the Department of Agriculture, down from Washington. He came with Dr. Alben, head of the Louisiana Experiment Station near Shreveport, and aside from the two clerks, there was no one present but J. H. and me.

As I understand it, Dr. Crane had flown down from Washington last night. Dr. Alben brought him down here by car, and after looking over the pecanias, - I suppose, they dined here and then hurried back to Shreveport where Dr. Crane's plane was tuned up to whisk him back to Washington.

But we talked no business at dinner, - only about China where Dr. Crane has recently traveled far and wide. I was glad I had read the volume on China not long back, for there were quite a few points he could elaborate on at some length for me, and then, too, it is always flattering to a guest, I think, if someone will ask some questions really bearing on his latest enthusiasm.

I shall not enumerate Dr. Crane's conversation, but I will say that he expressed the opinion that economic conditions in the Celestial Empire are far more harrowing than is generally known. He said that in two provinces alone during the past season, twenty million people had died of starvation. Dr. Crane is a robust man and displays not a sign of sentimentalism, but he declared that merely passing through those provinces, - and I believe his official duties required him to spend a little time in each, - nearly wrecked his nervous system, - such frightful evidence of every side of the terrible privation and death that withered people in the streets before one's very eyes. He says some parts of China, especially in some of those provinces untouched

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by Japanese military operations, are still perfectly lovely, but as for himself, while he should owe to re-visit those sections and linger long where the old cultural aspects are still in evidence, still, nothing in this world could impell him ever to go back to them, if, as a requisite, he would have to visit the starvation stricken areas.

We lingered so long over coffee, listening to his fascinating account of various phases of Chinese life, - especially the agricultural aspects and their marvelous primitive mechanical methods and so on, that there was no time for Dr. Crane to make a tour of Melrose, and so by now he must be back in Washington, quite untouched by any knowledge of "ye quaint olde mulatto plantation where he dined today. Naturally all this pleased me, for I have already made the Melrose tour with other guests in times gone by, and already knowing what I know, - was enchanted to spend all the time, - albeit selfishly, in listening to a sound American's impressions of contemporary China.

In today's post came a letter from the General, expressing himself as distinctly worried over the possibilities of war arising from the current Berlin strain. I am not worried, but if I had an old child and he were on the Russo-German border, I might be. To my way of thinking, the current strain is just another racket wherein the Kremlin dictators will try to get away with everything they can by means that covers the whole list down to, - but not quite to war. Frankly, I can't imagine anyone in Russia dreaming of actually starting a war against the power which holds the atom bomb, - not unless "Uncle Joe and company" have had enough of life and really wouldn't mind being blown into the middle of next week.

On finishing Jean Christophe, I was enchanted to discover a note by the translator and a sketch of Romain Rolland's life on the last page. It would have been alright with me if they had put these particulars on the first page, instead of page 238, - each page figured at 15 minutes for reading time, - for then I wouldn't have had to wade through quite so much before knowing what the blurb had to offer, for this is the first time I recall such a notice at the end of the book.

And with that opus out of the way, I read a page or two from a thing, styled a novel, entitled "The Garrison Chronicle" by one Garrison. The thing reads like an autobiography and mentions a heap of familiar name prominent in contemporary Massachusetts, but still I accept it as a novel. I must write the foundation, recommending some account of the book, the identity of its author or at least a statement as to whether the thing be fictional or not, just for the benefit by numb skulls like me who might read a book through supposing it to be gospel truth and having it turn out to be purely fictional. What Ho! 2, - Iran out so unexpectedly.....

3076

Wednesday, July 21st, 1948.

Memorandum:

If sunshine and blue skies tell the whole story, then we are certainly enjoying perfect weather.

But there somehow is always a breeze at Arenbourg, and so, in spite of the heat, each day starts off alright on the terrace, and the start is the thing.

But somewhere along the way, the pilgrims got jammed up, so that not a soul passed this way until much after supper, and the last ones were out of the place until first dark.

Around six o'clock, I had gone back to Arenbourg to put in a few extra licks, and when I returned to Melrose and nice and sweaty, was revelling in my bath, - Lo! pilgrims were announced. Of course there is a time for everything, and for pilgrims to file in when day is done and water is splashing high in the bath tub is not one of them.

But some of them turned out to be quite pleasant people, - Ph. D.'s from around the country, - Minnesota being the most remote State represented.

Alphonse Matoyer, junior, who conducts the gay little saloon, - known as the Melrose Social Club, just South of Arenbourg, came to see me this morning. His problem is as old as prohibition. What with the Natchitoches Dry Ordinance having been framed for the convenience of bootleggers and lawyers, it is possible for the members of Clubs to purchase full strength beer for themselves in their own Club. The general set up must be obvious, and I need scarcely add that beer naturally plays little more part in what goes over the bar than does the forbidden wine and whiskey.

But even though Capone be dead, all the evils in the prohibition rackets continue to make themselves felt, even in this remote area.

Some hill billy, - white but familiarly called Red, runs a garage on Hymen Cohen's plantation just below Melrose. Aside from his garage enterprise, he had himself elected Constable in the last election. Naturally his office requires him to eradicate the sale of intoxicating liquors, and so he undertakes his work with great diligence, while at the same time he engages a couple of account negroes to sell wine and whiskey for him on the side, while he busies himself arresting operators of the little poor man's club, like Alphonse, Jr., - or, if he can't catch them breaking the

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law, he tries to make himself disagreeable, as Constable, in the
lit le Clubs where local members do not patronize this legal
ogre.

But Red makes a mistake when he thinks he can muscle in on
river bottom territory, where hill billies are popular neither with
white nor colored residents. And so I was glad to have lunch alone
with J. H. today, so that we could go into the matter a little
and decide which larger political figure should be moved in one
direction or another to eradicate this bothersome person. Personally,
I have no stake in the Melrose Social Club and have never injected my
presence on the place when a frolic is going on, having too much
regard for the rights of those for whom it is intended, but
surely white must fight for colored in a case such as this wherein
trashy white has the nerve to try to up-set the gaiety of our
local Saturday and Sunday night gatherings.

Something tells me that before the end of the week, Red will
hear from on high that he had better stick to terrorizing the
white trash west of the cement highway in the foot hills of Gorham, and
leave us river bottom folks to make what we can of our leisure without
assistance from that direction.

Clemence came to see me today. She has been to Cloutierville
to get her baptism certificate from Father Becker, but the entry
could not be discovered, although her papa and mama and brothers and
sisters were all listed. This is the third case coming to
my knowledge wherein everone in a family appears in the
Church records except the one seeking his own name, and such
a coincidence, - or series of them, - seems odd. One thing about
Clemence's case that is also extraordinary is the fact that
she is a black negro, and those people usually are not Catholics.
Another point that seems extraordinary, and that is the race suggested
by the same lady's maiden name, - Ruben, - and her brother's name, -
Simon Ruben, which some how brings up the whole Old Testament to
my mind.

Long have I regretted the absence of family trees in the case
of many a family in this area, - mulatto and negro. From
where I sit, I should guess off hand that Clemence is pure "D", but
who knows, perhaps it will eventually turn out she is first cousin
to Gertrude Stein, or some such, which some might lay hold upon
to account for Clemence's paint pots and her canvases depicting
"Pigeons on the grass, alas!" - in oil.

I offer this communication as Exhibit A of what can really
be accomplished when a dull brain and frequent interruptions
really combine to turn out a worthless scrawl.....

3078

Thursday, July 22nd, 1948.

Memorandum:
May I congratulate you on the excellence of your letter
to the Madam, arriving in this morning's post.

She was altogether enchanted with it and I don't mind
saying I concurred with her in feeling it was handled with
consummate skill and delight.

She was naturally touched by the kind things you had to
say about the gift and your pleasure in noting the little
personal message she inscribed.

And, of course, I found additional particulars that interested
me. I had been wondering about your plans for a vacation, and
your letter gave me an excellent idea as to how you proposed
spacing it. The outing at Greenwood will afford you ever so much
satisfaction, I know, and the quiet of the countryside, - I hope
there won't be too many others there at the same time, - will
be a tonic all in itself.

In today's mail, too, came the July 20th issue of Life which
seems to have several articles in it which ought to make good
reading. There is an article headed "Satch" Makes the Majors"
that carries a large picture of a negro baseball player strumming
a guitar. The nonchalance of the halo is so suggestive of the
twists and wrinkles the local negroes give their hats that
the picture might well pass for something snapped in this neighborhood.
Especially among the youths, say from ten to twenty five, there seems
to be the most natural impulse to turn any kind of a hat
inside out, wrong side around other end to, creating a striking
bit of headgear out of a most prosaic looking head piece into
a composition that is like nothing ever seen elsewhere, and only
vaguely simulated by wlier tonsorial arrangements one sometimes runs
across in photographs of some tribe in darkest Africa.

And the lovely part of it is that the impulse to twist and
turn a mere hat into a fantastic headdress seems so natural to the
creator and the spectator that no one ever remarks about it, -
the maker never bothering to regard himself in a mirror and his
associates apparently never even noticing the business, no
matter how outlandish and marvelous it may be. I am hoping
I can get a collection of these unique inspirations someday, -
perhaps on one of little Miss Ramsey's films, for I know
you would be both astonished and enchanted with the record.

3079

Now that you are reading *The Unhurried Years*, I want to speak with you about a little paragraph, ever so innocent in itself, and quite charming, which Mrs. Brandon apparently read without having it strike a bell in her memory of early Natchez documents. To me much of the delight in doing research on the early Natchez records is found in the occasional bit of mosaic which, if kept in mind, will sometimes later be found to fit in ever so neatly in rounding out an otherwise incomplete picture or giving distinct tone or confirmation to a picture that otherwise would rest solely on imagination for an exact point.

In one of the early chapters, Dr. Butler mentions finding a little memorandum in a childish scrawl, when repairs were being made in the house, - the paper having obviously been written ages earlier. I don't recall the exact wording of the note but it is something to the effect that Peggy now has Mr. Hunt for a beau, and Mr. So and so and Mr. So and so. I think Dr. Butler explains that this note was obviously scrawled by Peggy (Margaret Ellis's sister).

Five or six years ago I loaned Dr. Butler my copy of the early Court documents of Natchez, covering a few years around 1800 to 1805. Had Dr. Butler read one of those entries, he probably would not have included the note in his present volume.

For along about 1804, the Court records state that the parents of Margaret Ellis are suing Francis Surget for having raped their daughter. Why the rich Ellises should have started suit against their rich neighbors over at Cherry Grove on such a charge, I have never been able to fathom. Certainly they didn't need monetary satisfaction, - and save for the resulting scandal, what could possibly be the point.

Now, in Mr. Audubon's brother-in-law's diary, kept in 1804, that gentleman details a leisurely trip he makes from New Orleans to Natchez with Mr. Hunt, - the unmarried uncle of the famous David Hunt. The Uncle's name was Abijah Hunt. The two gentlemen are making a long trip by horseback, and one night they stop off at an elegant plantation home, where they are dinner and overnight guests of their genteel hosts, who are mulattoes. When about to depart on the following morning, Mr. Abijah Hunt congratulates his host upon the beauty of his daughter, and asks if he may "take her under his protection" on returning to his home in Natchez. The host declined.

Apparently, although unmarried, Mr. A. Hunt was a gay blade, quite conscious of feminine attractions, whether they be found in the person of the mulatto's daughter or in the scion of the prominent Ellises. And so, later, Peggy was flirting with Mr. Hunt and two other gentlemen. Later, - for the record, she married Dr. Duncan of Auburn, and on her wedding journey down to The Cottage, was bitten by a black widow and died before reaching the Feliciana home where the newly weds were to spend their honeymoon. Thus Peggy came to an untimely end, but life must have been busy while it lasted.

3080

Friday, July 23rd, 1948.

Memorandum:

And so Aurellia say:

"When Mama and Pap and all us used to live over in the hills by Gorham, Bessie and me, we used to like to go to the Spring where there was nice cool water. And the hogs used to like to go there, too, sometimes. And me and Bessie, we used to like to go there after the hogs had wallowed in the spring because they made the water cloudy looking and it tasted good. And that new wine you made tastes just like that and its cloudy like that, too, only its sweeter."

So there you have, and long may it be remembered that my prize 1948 Melrose vintage of sice gin turned out to be nothing less and little more than hog wallow.

Well, Lord.....and besides, I haven't the vaguest notion what some rare year of real Champagne might put Aurellia in mind of, and so, bias though my own opinion is bound to be, I shall not commit myself for another a few days until the stuff has been finally settled and corked.

At Arenbourg, things rocked along ever so well today. Andy came at 5 this morning, and together we cut practically all the trees that have been growing on the side of the bank, from the terrace to the margin of the water below. I left about half a dozen cottonwoods and mulberry trees, which had grown 15 or 20 feet high in the last two seasons. Aside from opening up the view on the river to advantage, as indicated in snapshots you have had in the past, today's labors will also permit the trees that remain to grow with great rapidity the balance of this season so that a year hence they will be casting pretty shadows on the terrace itself, and shade is the thing I am concentrating on more than anything else at the moment.

This afternoon, Peter came with a tractor and spent half a day disking where he had ploughed last week, - the drive, Unit No. 2 and the terrace. Aside from the fact that all three of us were soaking, nobody seemed to mind the heat much, and Peter unwisely wore no hat, although in a constant glare, but he is used to that. As for Andy and me, we needed not parasols, since we were constantly in the shade of the young trees on which we were laboring. I am tired tonight, but filled with that kind of tiredness that is satisfying when it comes in the wake of a busy day that has produced results to our liking.

3081

There used to be an extra typewriter in this house which J. H. borrowed one day this Spring while his was being repaired.

Joe Henry happened in from Beaumont before the machine came back and asked if he might have it. It was pretty old, - the same one figuring in that elusive message: "There's a typewriter in your cabin".

And so Joe was told he might have it. He forgot to take it, however, but picked it up on his next go-round.

Last night at supper, - and apropos of nothing on earth; J. H. remarked:

"Oh, by the way, I have a new typewriter for you I brought from Alexandria this afternoon. I'll send it over right away."

And so a new Royal arrived forthwith, and it looks very nice and is possessed of about a million gadgets, the use of none of which have I any idea.

I have been too busy during the past couple of days to even insert a fresh sheet of paper and take a whack at it. But I reckon I may get around to it sometime this week end. So don't be surprised if you should shortly receive an envelope bearing what appears to be a new style in my ture hand. It will be just another case of "Plus que princiere, presque Royal".

I'm afraid the heat is having its effect on my patient. Eight or ten times every day for the past week, she has asked me the name of the new doctor in Cloutierville. Each time I have told her it was Dr. John Yaeger, and tried two or three different methods of helping her to remember it by association, but without success. Three times this morning, twice this noon and twice this afternoon, we have gone over the same problem, - Dr. John Yaeger. Just before supper time, she asked me what was the name "of that place below us". We had been talking about Cane River plantations, and I asked if she meant Hymen Cohen's which adjoins, or Magnolia just below. She said she was talking about the new name of that town below us, and said she couldn't ever remember it and she doubted if the people living there would ever grow accustomed to it, but that now she couldn't remember either the former name or the new one. Eventually it dawned on me that she was talking about Cloutierville. She seemed relieved to have had the name recalled but regretted it had been changed. I tried to be casual in assuring her that they had decided after all to keep the old name, so we could always, as in the past, call it Cloutierville, and it was only the new doctor they were calling Yaeger. Poor, tired soul. Let's hope autumn weather does ever so much more for her than at this point in the calendar seems possible.....

3082

Sunday, July 25th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Another hot, quiet week end. I might have taken time out to try my new typewriter, but kept putting it off. Perhaps I shall get around to it this week.

Dr. Yaeger and his wife telephoned this morning from Cloutierville, saying they would call at Melrose at 3 this afternoon but they failed to appear. I reckon some professional demands must have developed at the last moment.

Mrs. Rand, however, dropped by a little after 4 o'clock, bringing her nephew and his wife, who are visiting in Louisiana. Their home is Rochester, New York. I did a little tour for them, and then, to my own surprise, accepted their invitation to take supper with them at the camp. Dr. Rand and a few people were there and Fanny and Zelma were busy preparing food. So Dr. Rand took me for a little jaunt in his fine new speed boat. The sun was just slipping behind the Montrose hills, with an evenness of light spread that made for lovely reflections on the smooth surface of the river. I was delighted with the ride, and glad of the opportunity to observe Arenbourg from below the terrace. The tree cutting which Andy and I had engaged in on Friday looked alright from where I sat.

Supper was ever so satisfying from several angles. The food itself was delicious, - spaghetti with a luscious meat and mushroom sauce. Three or four kinds of breads, much pickles, olives and such like, and a huge salad, stressing greens and fruits, and a fruit punch that was grand.

The conversation was as good as the food, and the ever changing light effects on the silvery surface of the lake brought the whole business around to perfection.

It was dark when we were done and everyone except me had to give thought to Alexandria. I declined their invitation to drive me back home, preferring to walk home across the cotton fields. I feel so well disposed toward the world, now that I am here and have had a nice warm bath. But much of my satisfaction probably has its inception in the fullness of my stomach which makes me understand perfectly why my cat likes to fold up his paws and go to sleep after he has done well by his supper.

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In response to my inquiry, a letter came from Roy Hauser, the nursery man, at Deridder, La. It was from his stock that the Arenbroug pears came. I am casting about for some persimmon trees that will equal the pears when the latter are full grown. Merr Hauser has just the type required, and I have written an order for November delivery.

His letter states that he carries wax leaf ligustrum hedges, too, and I have written for prices. Don't you think we ought to have some to plant between the pears and persimmons along the driver from the Bermuda Road around to the side gate nearest Alphonse's. My thought is that from March through early November, the drive will be well delineated by the trees themselves, but that some evergreen should further accentuate the line, as between November and March when the fruit trees will have shed their leaves. The wax leaf ligustrum lends itself nicely to trimming, and can fairly easily be kept at a five or six foot height, thus enabling us to keep it well below the level of the lower branches of the fruit trees, and sufficiently removed from the trunks of the latter to give ample space for air circulation, while at the same time providing an evergreen line that will suggest intimacy for Units No. 1 and No. 2. It seems to me, too, that we might plant a semi-circular hedge of the same evergreen around each elephant trap. I have already planted crepe myrtles in a semi-circle by way of accentuating their curve. I thought a similar curve of Chinese magnolias just behind the crepe myrtles might be nice, - the soulangeana-tree variety, with the wax leaf ligustrum as the final back drop.

I shall plant some additional crepe myrtles in November, and the Chinese magnolias in the Spring, - if they are available, but the ligustrum must be planted in November, and so I am casting about for it now.

The Chinese magnolias of the tree variety have been difficult to locate during recent years, but I believe I have discovered some in Hamburg, Iowa. They should be planted in March, and that presents a difficulty, for while March means full Spring in Louisiana usually, March means frozen ground in Iowa at least. The trick involved is obvious, - how to get the plants out of the frozen earth and transplanted into well warmed dirt without ruining the things in digging and shocking them to death in transplanting. But I am taking the matter up with the Iowa house now, hoping some method may be worked out before cold weather arrives up yonder so we may work to advantage on the items when Spring returns to Louisiana.

I realize this letter is definitely on the dull side, and yet I never fail in my enthusiasm when the subject of the "training of our children" is to the fore.....

3084

Monday, July 26th, 1948.

Memorandum: How nice to have your letter of Friday.

I am sorry you are getting such a large parcel of heat and humidity. Such business is trying enough in the country, but it always seems twice as enervating in town, for somehow the other elements in Nature that tend to short circuit the heat and dampness in the country never quite get through the cement and asphalt curtains that isolate the city from the rest of creation.

I urge you not to attempt writing at such times. You know that I shall always be twice as happy in realizing you are just relaxation when an opportunity presents itself. Just a little line from time to time to indicate all is rocking along, and I shall be the happier because you are conserving your energies for the impending vacation, for it will be such a heap pleasanter if you can move out to Greenwood in not too exhausted a condition. I used to think everyone in town ought to have a month's vacation each year, - one week to rest up before starting out, two weeks of a change in horizon, and the four week to adjust one's self to urban doings once more before heading into business.

I heard something direct today, making me ponder on how close to Cane River sound forth the African tribal drums from the heart of the Dark Continent. Elmer, the one time Melrose cook, lives on the opposite bank of Cane River from here. Her young daughter is Celeste's house servant. Last year, Elmer and her daughter lived up Bermuda way. Elmer's husband, being in prison, Elmer took unto herself another temporary husband, - "more ageable than me and almost 50", as she expressed it. Her new husband was wont to cast eyes of yearning at Elmer's daughter, and neither of the ladies liked that. I know not if persuasion was tried on the man, but something stronger was eventually hit on. The ladies went to Natchitoches and purchased some Paris Green and some Pink Sausages, - whatever the latter may be, but regardless of the color, the stuff really appears to be some extra fine sausage. Back home, they went out on the bayou and capture a moccasin which they took home and baked in an oven until it was dry-dry. Then they pounded the shrivelled serpent into what looked like fine pepper. The sausages, pink, withal, were nicely cook, with the Paris green well mixed in the meat, and plenty of "moccasin peper" was added to give additional flavor and poison. Then the whole thing was delicately served up to the interim husband who ate it with great relish. Shortly afterward he began to vomit, and one of his sons's chancing to drop in at the time, whisked him off to the hospital, where an antidote saved him. He only returned to Elmer long enough to get his Sunday clothes and carry them off.

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Perhaps we were wrong in complaining of Elmer when she merely baked the turkey, leaving all its insides intact within the bird.

It was 106 on the thermometer this afternoon and tonight's radio says the pastures have all dried up to the East of Natchitoches in Winn Parish, and it is so hot and dry in Rapides and Avoyelles Parishes to the South of us that the cotton is dying. I have heard J. H. say it can't be too dry for cotton but it can be too hot. This must be it.

And tonight's radio says that an oil well has been successfully brought in at Gorham, in the hills immediately behind Derry, and that other wells are being drilled in the same region. At the same time, the Shell Company is putting down a 750 foot pipe between this house and the big house, hoping to strike oil, and if not, to strike a good vein of water. Something tells me they are especially interested in the water possibilities, for they are working in 8 hour shifts, 24 hours around the clock. I don't know what method is used in sinking the 4 inch pipe, but whatever it may be called in the oil business, it is certainly a much quieter process than I have ever known. I reckon the trucks on which the machinery is operating is not more than 50 feet, in a bee line through the bushes, from my front gallery, and yet I hear nothing more unusual than the constant flowing of water. I associate oil and water well digging with much clatter and bang and the pounding of metal hammers on metal pipes, but so far nothing of the sort has transpired, and they work has been going on for 16 hours and they are already down several hundred feet. In times past, I have heard of noiseless steel rivetting and painless dentistry, but never witnessed these marvels in operations. But Shell seems to have something in the oil well department, so we may still hope for miracles from the other leading drillers.

I am reading a few essays by James Norman Hall, in a volume called *Under The Thatched Roof*. I believe the book takes its title from the fact that the author occupied a thatched cottage in some South Pacific isle, perhaps Tahiti, or some such, in the 1930's or along about then. This volume is all I have from the New Orleans Public at the moment, except another which has to do about prospects for a stabilized Peace immediately following the close of hostilities. As this book went to press in 1945, and seems to speculate much on what will be wise to do when the guns cease firing, it seems a little out-dated in this year of the Berlin Blockade.

I would have put a "k" in that last word, had not a tap on my window distracted me at the second I was about to hit at it, - the k not the window. It was R. Brew, saying he sought advice on marriage. Of course he didn't want advice, but merely wanted to hear himself think out loud a little. And so I gave him a steak sandwich, a couple of peaches, and a glass of milk, - and the world, with that on his stomach, appeared ever so much simpler to his way of thinking, enabling him to sing his piece quickly, and so out into the night. I shall digest a couple of Mr. Hall's thatches for myself right now, and thence to bed.....

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Tuesday, July 27th, 1948.

Memorandum:

We were unexpectedly honored by Sister and her three children this afternoon. They will stay for a day or two, but will probably fly out when the week end approaches and she discovers that Joe Henry, whom she can't stand, is heading this way.

The reason for the visit was characteristic. Dr. Wenk's father has just had an operation for cancer. Sister declares her husband makes her sick, going to look after his father five or six times a day. She told him this noon she wasn't going to stay home any more if he could pay less attention to his father and more to his family, and thereupon, - as soon as he had gone to the hospital, she put the three children in the car and headed this way for a few days. Surely there is nothing so helpful as a disordered mind when it really gets to functioning.

Somewhere in the Parish, there must have been rain tonight. For several hours the thunder rolled constantly while the flashes of light were so close, one upon the other, that not two ticks of the clock intervened between explosions. Perhaps we shall be getting our share of the water in due time.

According to some theorists, the last two weeks of July and the first week of August form a calendar span in which many a tree and plant incline toward rapid mid summer growth, after which they begin preparing themselves as against the autumn cool spells and tend to withdraw from further expansion. A nice shower at this moment, - assuming this theory to be correct, would be wonderful. At the moment, the most evident tendency toward going place at Arenbourg are the crepe myrtle, several of which are in bloom, - white, purple and watermelon red. I think the white and the watermelon red ones are the nicest, and I am marking them with piece of cloth so they may be re-set this winter, for they all will appear to better advantage, I think, if the purple and the red ones don't get too closely tangled up.

Just to prove there are exceptions to all rules, the grandiflora magnolias last year, instead of growing in the Spring, waited until the dry-dry months of September and

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October, when contrary to all laws of floral development, they went to putting out new leaves and branches which impelled Dr. Rand to quote from Old Louisiana, wherein Eddy Suydam, after visitin the Smith girls at Asphodel, remarked: "I myself have seen it, and I still don't believe it".

Today's post brought the Madam a package from 81 Charlotte Street, containing Louis Adamic's My Native Land. "aving recently read the book, I shall be able to speak more intelligently about the book when writing to thank her on the Madam's behalf. I never did figure out how that book enjoyed the popularity it did about the time it was released. Mr. Adamic, you may recall, having been born a Slavene, did an extensive account of the land of his birth in that volume. I have no doubt that it may well have been factually correct, but I cannot account for the popularity of a volume having to do with the past and present of that seemingly remote Balkan country. The details concerning Gustapo cruelties, both past and present, gave the thing a horror tinge that may have appealed to people who delight in gangster themes. It seems to me that it was in this book that the author spoke of religious and political doings that were especially unpleasant. I remember something about a Bishop who had a chair of iron and a band of the same metal, heated red hot and thereupon seated some poor culprit in the sizzling seat and crowned him with the glowing crown of iron. Such harrowing stories may appeal to some readers, but for myself, I should prefer something like Mr. A.'s Dinner at the White House or some such.

In speaking of Arenbourg, I intended to remark that the Phillipine lilies burst into bloom today. I am not sure if you are acquainted with this particular type. The stalk is about 6 feet in height, - sometimes they climb to 11 or 12 feet, and at the top 6 or 8 blossoms open in much the same fashion and quite similar in appearance to the Spring blooming Easter lily. We haven't very many at Arenbourg, but we shall plant some more forthwith. It is so nice having flowers in July and August, when so many gardens in this area are inclined to be rather skimpy in blossoms. The Phillipine lily is supposed to do best in Louisiana hill country where the dry clay soil seems to be especially suitable for them. But they seemed to do alright at Arenbourg, and each season their number multiplies modestly and they never fail to blossom with luxuriance, so I gather they are not dying of homesickness for the piney hills.

You hold the thought that a deluge may hit us soon, and with the first drop of rain, everything in our pet department ought to start jumping and unfolding no end....

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Thursday, July 28th, 1948.

Memorandum:

How nice to have your elegant long letter in today's post. I wanted to read it slowly, for I like to dwell on each word and phrase that I am bound to absorb on the original and only reading. Accordingly I didn't quite finish, so that I have the guarantee of another delightful sitting on the morrow.

I am so appreciative of your account of what you have explored in the Unhurried Years. Let me see if there is anything by way of foot notes I might add to some of the names you mention. Oh, yes, - Aunt Rapalja, - pronounced locally as "Rapp - a - lay" - must have been quite an elegant lady, if one is to judge by her fine portrait, hanging in the Laurel Hill dining room. There is something in her pose and features that suggested Dame Sarah Delano Roosevelt to me, and the dowager duchess personality seems to be further brought out by the sumptuous stiff brocaded gown illuminating the portrait. Somehow it is difficult to imagine her jumping on her bridled horse and heading out at full gallop when sounds of her brawling husband began echoing down second creek on his boistrous way home from Natchez. One would almost suppose from her picture that she might well have been capable of putting him over her knee when he finally blew in.

In some of the early Court papers in Natchez, there is cited the case of Georges Rapalja, charged with driving a fence post through a man's chest. It seems to me he received 6 month's probation, - or some such, - too light a sentence if guilty, too severe if not. It was good of him to break his own neck in a drunken brawl as soon as he did, and especially for Aunt Rapalja who certainly made the most of her opportunities in building the smart town house on Court House Square in Natchez, and in developing her plantation home and gardens at Beaupre. This plantation home was burned a few years ago, and much of its once famous garden has been devoured by cattle or taken up piecemeal and carted away. Its boxwoods and camellias were famous, and most of them were cradled by Aunt Rapalja.

You also speak of a Mr. Huntington who looked after Laurel Hill and some of Dr. Mercer's adjoining plantations while the latter was abroad. This Mr. Huntington was a son-in-law of Sir William Dunbar, whose home, - The Forest, is hard by Beaupre, Beverly, Laurel Hill and so on. I have forgotten which daughter Mr. Huntington married although some particulars about him proba ly appear in Mrs. Roland Dunbar's "Diary or Life of old Sir William. The Dunbars always seem to be uncertain about

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Mr. Huntington, or perhaps they would like to ignore his existence, - and I can't imagine why. Perhaps they thought this ancestor or relative-in-law would have done better planting his own cotton instead of looking after Dr. Mercer's.

Some of the oak trees he planted still stand, and they are grand. But that silly old Wilmer Shields cut some of them when he ploughed up some of the 8 great terraces that stepped down from Laurel Hill to the butterfly lakes off toward the chapel, hidden away in a grove of its own live oaks.

In reading Dr. Mercer's will a number of year's ago, I discovered the key to Wilmer Shields's name, - or rather a hint that eventually led me to further particulars which accounts for the name. In his will, Dr. Mercer leaves several plantations to Wilmer Shields, - surrounding Laurel Hill, as well as "all my lands in Illinois, purchased from General Shields". Later I learned through the Lomax correspondence about when Dr. Mercer had to give up the idea of paying court to Linsey Lomax, - because of the birth of Wilmer Shields obviously, - and about the same time General Shields of Illinois was entertained widely in New Orleans where Dr. Mercer was one of its foremost citizens. As a speculator, Dr. Mercer might well have bought lands anywhere in the country, but he never did, - save his immediate plantation holdings contiguous to Laurel Hill. His investments were inclined toward city real estate in part, but primarily in such items as stock certificates in public utilities, etc. Thus, one concludes, the good doctor for what was undoubtedly an ever so handsome price, purchased undeveloped lands in Illinois from the General, who while conveying the deeds to the property in public, undoubtedly granted the purchaser the right to make use of the Shields name for the pressing purpose for which the doctor had use of it.

There was another Shields family in Natchez, - the first one having come there following exciting days when he fought in the French Revolution. But this family was in no way related to the "Laurel Hill Shields, although, curiously enough, the name Wilmer eventual developed in the original branch at a later period.

Well, Lord. All this must be of slight value to you in whatever you run across in Dr. Butler's opus. But I mention it regardless, thinking it may assist a little in widening the scope.

And I must mention just one more thing. In St. Francisville, at one of the Barrow's, is a most fascinating picture of Cousin Eliza Young, - as a mature lady, dressed in black taffeta and wearing a hat of like material. A portrait of Maria Thresa in her later year is much like it. But what is extraordinary is this: - The picture of Cousin Eliza was painted in the late 1840's or perhaps 1850, a few years before Anna Mercer's death in 1852. Following that event, Cousin Eliza had Anna's portrait, - the figure standing, but in a shroud, standing immediately behind the likeness of Cousin Eliza herself. I want the picture so badly, - it is being destroyed by vandal treatment, but I can't get it.

The Wenks are still here and the pot hasn't boiled over yet. I'm looking forward to the morrow, - and a continuation of your nice let-

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Dora 7/26/48

Thursday, July 30th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Today's incoming post contained an envelope from Atlanta and one from Norman. Mrs. Brandon's contained a clipping about Jefferson College with the note that she was too busy at the moment to write. Dora's letter, as you will note, indicates that James Brandon's father, Mr. Gerard Brandon and daughter and wife are dead. The wife, - Miss Daisey, died a year or so ago. I am surprised not to have heard of Mr. Gerard's death, for surely Miss Nellie would have written me about that, - if it has happened, - knowing how fond I am of him. But as Frances Brandon is Mr. Gerard's daughter-in-law, she surely ought to know what she is talking about, - and any way I slice it, I don't.

I shall write Miss Nellie, Dora and Frances this week end.

It was much too hot here today, but in spite of it, I stuck pretty close to Arenbourg where I had Andy helping me get a heap of crust-formed earth around the nandinas loosened up so that if it does get around to rain eventually, their ability to scoop up plenty of drinking water will be at maximum levels.

Circumstances brought me back to Melrose several times, and each time so much a-drip that I had to bathe and put on fresh clothes before contacting this one and that who chanced to be passing.

J. H. invited six men from around the country to dinner, - horticultural doctors from Washington D. C. slap through to Texas. They were late in arriving. I waited half an hour but then dined alone, as noon is the only time I have to contact my secretary.

But although I missed them over the fried chicken, they caught up with me after coffee, J. H. bringing them over here to chat for a while with me. He told me at supper they wanted to talk some more and three of them were coming back this autumn to spend an afternoon with me. They were pleasant and I shall enjoy seeing them, although I shall make it a point to learn as much about their field of endeavor as they may learn from me about Mississippi and Louisiana. After all, an afternoon is an afternoon, and if I started out by doing all the talking, we certainly would be running out of material long before evening shadows started making patterns across the terrace.

3091

Just as I was sealing last night's Memo to you, Puny tapped on my window. Ostensibly it was just a friendly call, but before conversation had gone far, it became evident that my help was being sought in a domestic matter. Puny's wife, Zelma, has her 19 or 20 year old twin sons with her, - Little King and Big Six. Little King works on the plantation and Big Six lives at home, too, but is on the G. I. Educational rolls. Zelma's brother, Cy, also lives with them. Puny feels the twins and Cy do not contribute enough toward household expenses and that Zelma is too indulgent in letting them spend most of their income without making a sizable contribution to everyday operating expenses. Puny wants me to pass by the house one of these nights and suggest a program for a common pool of expenses to be met by Puny, King, Six and Cy, each contributing a fourth. One excellent rejoinder by Zelma might be that I would do well to mind my own business, I think. I very much doubt if arbitrators or umpires, even when acting at the request of all concerned, are ever very successful in handing down a decision that will please any, not to mention all. If I am smart, I reckon I'll let Puny and Zelma work out their own domestic problems without the spectacle of me sticking out my neck to little purpose in the end than getting it clopped.

I never did see Aurellia today, save on the wing, and she was hot and bothered, - just a-bustin' to tell me all about her trip to town yesterday. I placed a few details from her together with additional particulars from her brother, Andy, who was helping me spade. It seems that in response to her efforts to get her mother on Old Age Pension, Aurellia received a letter from Dr. Knipmayer's office, - a couple of days ago, requesting her to bring her mama, - Leotina, - to town for a examination. Accordingly on Thursday morning, Aurellia girded up her loins, - and Leotina's, - and headed for town by automobile. Of course she never did go to Dr. Knipmayer's office but spent the day in the Parish Welfare Office, which is something else again than the Public Health Department. But all in all, - although she didn't accomplish what she set out to do, she did, nevertheless, have a wonderful time, - as, I suppose, many a wiser soul has done before her. Having sold a calf last week, she bought herself a \$50.00 radio and an elegant lavender and pink silk parasol for Heaven knows what price, - but whatever the figure may have been, it was bound to have been cheap, - lavender and pink. Andy tells me his mama says she had a wonderful day in town, - her second visit in 67 years, and I have no doubt Aurellia under her new parasol must be as proud as a pouter pigeon. The nice thing about it is that Aurellia is by nature a girl of the open spaces. On occasion, in the middle of a blazing afternoon, she is likely to jump astride her horse, riding astride without saddle, and gallop to an open pasture where her cow may be grazing, descend forthwith and milk the cow in the full glare of a mid summer sun, and then having turned her horse loose, toat the pale of milk back home barefoot. If ever there were a purely decorative parasol, Aurellia's is it, and I am perfectly sure that no pampered little Park Avenue hot house girl ever had anything half so important to her heart.

as this is to Aurellia....

3092

Sunday, August 1st, 1948.

Memorandum:

A heavy rain to the North of us a few miles out the heat wave temporarily. but the sun goes right on blazing away.

The Joe Henrys came Friday night and left by automobile for New York this morning.

Saturday night, I read a few pages from a thing called "Mrs. Mike" by a couple of Friedmans. It is probably a novel or a biography in novel form. I certainly wish a publisher's blurb would preface the recording of such books so the reader might have some idea if he is contending with history or fiction, - information particularly needed in my own case since I have been known to read a book from cover to cover without having sense enough to determine, - a confusion that seems almost inevitable when the book speaks of actual people having been in contact with the fictional character. It certainly wouldn't be difficult to insert these words, - "Historical Novel" immediately after the title, I should imagine. I find myself quite ready to accept some tale as factual in cases wherein people still living appear as prominent associates with what turns out later to be a purely imaginary individual.

From what little I have read, I take it "Mrs. Mike" is the story of an Irish American girl of Boston who is sent into the great North West of Canada for her health, - the first step in her quest being marriage at 16 to a North West Mounted Policeman and a trek of 700 miles from the nearest point of civilization to set up housekeeping. Surely such a move represents wisdom in one respect, - and especially for a frail, ailing child, since there wouldn't be the slightest chance for a doctor to get hold of her to spoil any "ary Baker Eddy influence the girl may have taken with her on leaving Boston.

I have often been struck by the piteousness of suffering animals, as portrayed in stories, often, it has seemed to me, more effective and moving than the cruelties suffered by human beings. Perhaps in cases of animals it is because they seem so much more lacking than human beings in sensing the causes if not the reasons for their plight. In "Miss Mike" there is an account of a beaver, his paw caught in a trap which, when sprung, jerked the animal into the air where it was found hanging, still faintly struggling, its eyes having been pecked out by a marauding hawk, constantly encircling the poor thing. The snare of man, the torture of a bird of prey, - there certainly is a double-dip in an unkind fate. Lord...Lord...

3093

But turning to another and quite different type of literature, let's recall with delight your recent lines referring to little Marcel and Albertine. What a charming parallel you draw between their correspondence and a contemporary one. And how delighted am I if, on occasion, you find you are making use of words and phrases that seem to illustrate the oneness of expression dominating the exchange of our thoughts. I don't mind confessing to you that many a time a word, an expression, a sentence of yours is on my finger tips as I tap these keys, but unfortunately, - because of my curious spelling, I realize I could probably never get them down on paper sufficiently comprehensible for anyone to make out, and so with some labor, I twist the word or phrase into something more simply spelled. And so the subtle flattery of mutual use, - in the my case, the borrowing of expressions from you, becomes recognizable only to one who knowing my inclinations so well, undoubtedly catches the little unexpected turn, and probably you smile to yourself in realizing exactly why I abruptly detoured from the direct path I would have pursued, were the conversation verbal rather than typed on the home front, everything was ever so quiet with only two or three brief calls from friends of Celeste who passed this way to see me momentarily. What with the heat and an all too evident tendency toward over-weight, I have been trying to clip calories for the past two or three weeks. I am beginning to have some success in cutting down the in-take, but the avoidances lingers on stubbornly. The enormous way which the big house runs itself, and particularly in the culinary department, makes it both tiresome and tempting to approach the table. Mattie, the present cook, fries things marvelously. In consequence, - and primarily, I suppose, because she like to fry chicken, we have had fried chicken for dinner and supper every day for at least three months. Friday it was 8 fried chickens and steak; Saturday it was 8 fried chickens and an 18 pound ham; Sunday it was 7 fried chickens and a flock of pork chop. So, if one doesn't care for elegantly fried chicken, there is something else, but just why there should be fried chicken, - always fried and never otherwise, and twice a day regardless, I wouldn't be able to say I might add that during the past year, the plantation has raised no chickens, -- those on which we lean so heavily all coming from Swift and Company. It is just as well not to try figuring out this business, and it would, of course, be positively disastrous if one's mind started turning, as the board greans, in the general direction of Europe or Asia.

I'm wondering if you find something hollow, as do I, in the spy story, centering around Miss Bentley. As her operations took place during 1944 - 1942, - not exactly chronological the way I jotted them down, I can't see that whatever she says she secured by way of information was extraordinary for exportation to Russia, since Russia was definitely a friendly power and Tererhan and Yalta were apparently merely contemporary public meetings wherein the information Miss Bentley says she was trying to secure was seemingly exchanged with old Uncle Joe as a mere matter of course. I can't imagine what the current excitement is all about.....

3094

Monday, August 2nd, 1948.

Memorandum:

Your card from Greenwood Lake was an unexpected plaisir for somehow I hadn't realized you were beginning your sectional vacation quite so early. I believe you mentioned possible dates in your letter to the Madam but through interruptions at the time of reading or general dullness on my own part, the precise moment for your first outing slipped my mind.

I do hope your days were restful and your night skies spangled with stars, for what with no moon these night, - or at least a late rising one, the heavens, if cloudless, should have been marvelous.

From the enclosure, you will notice another card came to hand in the same post. I am glad the girls are having this splendid trip. Perhaps their schedule will bring them back to this area by cotton time, which should afford them one of the best seasonal moments for catching plantation atmosphere. Long have I wished to get some excellent portraits such as they take with a bale of cotton as a back-drop for a white person in the center and a profile of a mulatto and a negro to right and left. Perhaps this may be accomplished this year.

Ezra dropped in to see me a few minutes this noon. I hope he comes back again some evening soon, for he is the first Melrose negro to register in Natchitoches's forth coming elections, - the last of August, and I am anxious to learn the details covering the enrollment of negroes by the hill billy office holders. He told me Bill Jones sent a number of people from his plantation to register in town, and that Bill thinks it would be well if all the Parish people of color could arrange to vote of the same candidates for the several offices requiring new occupants, - the full force of the colored vote thus demonstrating to the disgruntled politicians that the negro does represent a force that must be reckoned with. Ezra says that now one person from Melrose has voted, he think perhaps dozens may register next year. At the moment, he says, the local negroes are frightened to enter their names, fearing the hill billies may persecute them. He says that J. H. told him that he was going to try to have a polling place created for the Melrose area, thus avoiding the necessity for people from here to travel to the beginnings of the hills behind Montrose where lots of things might happen on election day, should hateful hill billies make up their mind to start something when the Cane River

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3095

negroes go there to cast their ballots.

I burden you with this matter in some detail, feeling you may be interested in first hand accounts of what occurs here in the deep South where, as in the present case, this is the first election in Matchitoches Parish since Reconstruction days that the negro is being permitted to vote.

Ezra says that somehow everyone is given to understand that when asked to what political party he belongs, he must declare himself a democrat. He told me of one man, named Tenance, when asked about his affiliations, stated that he was a Republican, whereupon he was immediately put out of the registration place. Without being much schooled in the differences in States Rights versus Federal Powers, there seems to be an innate feeling on the part of the negro that their support comes directly from Washington rather than Baton Rouge. Just before leaving, Ezra remarked that "I don't suppose negro voting for a while will make much difference so far as equalizing our status before the Courts, but perhaps our votes will make the politicians provide buses for our colored children like those provided for the white children, and that will mean a heap, since my six year old child must walk five or six miles to school, and when he gets there he is probably so tired he can't possibly learn much."

The mention of Ezra Williams brings to mind his brother, Jack, who went from Melrose to the Tobin plantation, Ty-po, at the beginning of the present year. I am finished with colored voting aspirations at the moment, but I would like to remark how imperative it seems to be for a plantation operator to take a paternal interest in the debt making propensities of his tenants. As between January and April, Jack had run up an indebtedness above and beyond his weekly pay, - some \$400.00. Between April and July, Sam Tobin had advanced him another \$300.00, while by August 1st, Jack had borrowed another advance of \$400.00 to have his car repainted and worked on. Because of his philandering ways, Jack's wife has left him, which means he will have to have much extra help in picking his cotton, since some of the larger children went with her. At the most generous figuring, Jack couldn't possibly make, - under inordinately favorable conditions, more than \$1,000.00, and by the sums indicated above, it is evident he has already exceeded this year's profit and is already in the hole against next year's crop. I suppose there is no fast and hard rule covering cash or credit advancement against a tenant's potential crop, but the policy cited doesn't seem to be a good one and is indicative, I suppose, of other policies which have put Ty-po into bankruptcy. And in the end, the banks will be able to collect on collateral for money advanced, but Mr. Tobin will never be able to collect on his over-drawn negroes, since their only collateral is their good nature.

Again my thanks for your message from Greenwood, and may your visit have given you as glowing coloring as the Jaffe influence on the picture side of the card itself....

7208

3096

Carolyn Ramsey
(card 7/28/48)
Rudolph 8/1/48

Tuesday, August 3rd, 1948.

Memorandum:

A strange post today. The enclosure which is of little or no interest, save the promise of a visit, and a letter from little Miss Alberta, reporting her return to New Orleans where she found herself pleased to be once more, her court yard lovely and her mail pouch empty, what with letters forwarded to her in Pennsylvania and Ohio never having caught up with her. There was a flock of books from the New Orleans Public Library, too, but just a lot of trash, detective stories and so on, - all of which I sent slap back.

Accordingly, I find myself down to my King James and my Marcel Proust versions of the Bible, which will serve me until something of a different character than today's shipment comes out of the Crescent City. I think I shall re-read The Brothers Karamazov, if Crime and Punishment aren't available. I never have read the latter and am curious to have a go at it.

The heat continues and I continue to spade.

The plantation finds itself in one of those in-between periods when odds and ends are the order of the day, as the cotton begins opening and negroes great and small begin contemplating the advent of the picking season. One or two hardy souls have already started, but the heat is so great that there were sun strokes the first day.

Adjoining the new store a new building is in the process of rising, and it seems to grow fast, being built of concrete blocks. It is about 25 by 50 feet, and is designed to house pecanes, which seems rather odd, since they are never kept longer than 24 hours from the time they are brought in from the orchards until they are shipped.

I have christened it "The Fort". In an e bellum times, plantations used to have stockaded areas where fowls were raised, the stockade built to keep out predatory animals. There were ones intended for chicken raising, called Chicken Forts, and for turkeys called Turkey Forts, and even larger areas those stockaded call Nigger Forts wherein were kept those negroes brought directly from Africa who were confined within these camps until their wildness had worn off and they could be set to tilling the fields. Pecane Fort

3097

3097

is too long to say, and so henceforth it will merely be referred to locally as "The Fort", a name which seemed to take hold immediately.

Pat and I had supper alone tonight. He confided to me that he goes to the hospital on Monday for three or four days, - some kind of an operation that seems not unusual for those like himself who have had appendicitis operations in years gone by.

He said he wouldn't tell his grandmother about the operation since it might worry her. Although more pronounced now than formerly, still it is quite in line with other days in that someone under the same roof could be hospitalized and returned home without great interest being excited as to the absence of one member of the family or another.

I passed by Celeste's this afternoon to take Madam Regard my copy of Owen Meredith's "Lucille", which she had asked to borrow the other day. I had learned from the servants this morning that Madam Regard had had an attack of some illness early this morning. I suppose it may have been gall stones. I found her much as usual, but in bed. She said Celeste had telephoned Watchitoches and that Don had driven Dr. Eleanor to "elrose around 7 or 8 o'clock this morning, and a mere visit from the lady doctor always made her feel ever so much better. At noon, the lady doctor had telephoned to inquire about her patient. I suppose such consideration is one of Dr. Eleanor's unique attributes. I thought of Dr. Miller and what she once told me: "Once a person, - white, yellow or black, has come to me for treatment, from that time forth, I feel somehow as though they are as kin folk to me, - as though they were a part of me, - and no matter whatever happens from then on, I always feel that person ever so close to my heart."

If only there were more professional people in medicine and fewer business people.

I loved Elmer Davis tonight when, in speaking of the current Ferguson Committee hearings, he referred to Miss Bentley as "the not-blond lady spy". Somehow I find myself as much in the dark as to what to think of all this business, which, I must say, seems to possess a phoney element about it.

But Miss Bentley is not the only puzzling personality in the piece for me. Surely I am all at sea when I learn that another witness is no other than a recent Editor of The Daily Worker who deserted that paper, the Communist Party and became a Roman Catholic. I make even less sense out of this that I did when Heywood Brown joined the followers of St. Peter, and equally amazed was I when little Miss Clare Booth Luce headed out in the same direction. All I can conclude is that the Catholic Church had better be more watchful or the first thing

we know it, itself, will be poi

3098
RD 8/27/48

3098

Wednesday, August 4th, 1948.

Memorandum:

You will find the enclosure interesting.

Two points puzzle me: 1st, how for the second time in a year I could mis-address an envelope, - the other one being in the case of Dr. Miller which went to you; and 2nd: - why the Memorandum was torn up.

It is good to know there was nothing personal in the Memorandum, - a point to which you might not subscribe, but a statement we shall both appreciate, since it would seem that it takes particular eyes to read the import and meaning of these communications.

I replied casually to the enclosed letter, remarking in a lie that I had merely set the in-coming item aside in a sealed envelope to await later reading, along with the Memorandum which I wanted to have the Conrad section read back to me before filing it with the rest of my journal, and that in disposing of the items as described was precisely what I had intended doing myself on re-reading them. This reference was set down casually with thanks for taking care of the matter for me.

I suppose I average about 10 out-going letters a day and except for the Miller communication, I recall no other slips, which, I suppose is a fair average, although I propose henceforth to make perfection, not average, my record.

On the home front, the continued heat flattened out the head layer of cement blocks on the new "ecane Fort, in consequence of which all building operations in that department came to a sudden halt. In line with pronouncements of the past ten days, the weather man continues to predict cloudy weather with scattered showers, so, in spite of the unfailing clear skies, we may eventually get a cieling overhead that will end up by getting the cement blocks moving again within a few days.

Another batch of Talking Books fell out of the postman's pouch this morning, a strange assortment of things I had read and stuff I never have to read. I take it there must be some vacation substituting in progress in the New Orleans Public which may account for such items as "The Walls of Jericho" and "The Mystery of the Midnight Something or Other" coming my way. Among the other items, I did find some kind of a report on some of the more famous undertakings by the Museum of Natural History, which I shall sample ginerly until something I really want to read comes to hand.

8008

3099

In a recent New York Times Book Review, I noticed a picture of what I took to be Mr. and Mrs. Hohn Hancock, about whom a good biography has long been overdue, - on the Reading Machine, at least. There were some highly fascinating paragraphs about him in the Life of Paul Revere, read last Winter, making me want to go further into Mr. Hancock's doings, and especially those of his uncle who, if memory serves, had an elegant colonial house and splendid garden and park somewhere in the environs of Boston. Once when visiting that place, I made inquiry as to the probably location of the garden, which, possibly, has been swallowed up by the growth of the city, but at the time no one seemed able to enlighten me. That was in the days before the Federal Guide series, of course, which, had they then existed, would no doubt have set me straight on that point or suggested ways and means of determining what information I sought.

In speaking last night of the "Nigger Forts", my mind began thinking along ante bellum lines and the only one I could remember hearing of was at Hornbeck, Louisiana, somewhere in the Bayou L'Aringwin neighborhood. That particular one was remotely situated some miles from the cultivated river bottoms, and was owned by New Orleans slave dealers who sent negroes brought in direct from Africa to Hornbeck for a "cooling off" period.

I never heard of one in the Natchez area, although one of the largest slave dealers operating in the Natchez market did have plantations just below the Mississippi line in Louisiana one of which was named Angola, - a plantation which later was purchased by the State of Louisiana for a State's prison and farm.

Should you, in reading The Unhurried Years, run across anything regarding a slave rebellion in the 1830's, I would be glad if you would let me know. I never discussed the matter with Dr. Butler, but often when visiting The Cottage, I have been told by Miss Louise Butler, of the rising between St. Francisville and Natchez, - I believe around 1835. According to Miss Louise, Mrs. Mercer was at 3 o'clock dinner one day when one of the servants urged her to take her accustomed demi-tasse, which she had passed by because of a headache. According to Miss Louise, the faithful butler whispered to her as he cleared away the dishes that death was impending and that she should rush to her carriage which he had brought to the door while she was eating. This she did, and the carriage raced to Ellis Cliffs and Butchins Landing where a waiting boat sailed out from shore just after Mrs. Mercer stepped aboard - a howling mob behind her. The inference was that the coffee had been poisoned, - a fact the servant had discovered and so had been able to save his mistress. I must ask Dr. Butler about all this. Naturally there was never much in newspapers about such difficulties even in War times, for obvious reasons. It does seem to me I have seen some reference in official papers to some executions in 1835 in the Woodville area, but I can't recall for certain. There are so many things we must eventually inquire into when "our children" at Arenbourg have reached their majority.....

1046

Carolyn Ramsey
3/10/08

Thursday, August 5th, 1948.

Memorandum:

From the enclosure, you will note that Carolyn would seem to have started on her Western travels rather late. A line in the letter seems to indicate a bit of bridge burning which worked alright for Cortez and, let us hope, may work out satisfactorily in the present instance, too.

Today, being Knipmayer day, we heard odd bits of news from around the Parish. Dr. K. recalled that Miss Sally's nephew, Clarence Pierson, was at the 4th of July picnic on Magnolia where he did quite a bit of talking about the 100 miles per hour he could make in his new Rolls Royce. He is the same Clarence Pierson who with his wife, visited Melrose quite inebriated one Sunday a year or so back. Well, the gasoline-whiskey combination produced the expected results one day last week when a policeman found an eye ball in the road, and behind some bushes, the Rolls and Clarence whose eyeball was completely gouged out, plus his eyelid and eyebrow. But since there is said to be a special God for fools and drunks, that diety was standing bye for Clarence who is both, - and he has survived.

Dr. K. says he understands the Lady Doctor is quite busy in her new location, which is good news, and that oil has been brought to the surface in the Chestnut, La., area, which isn't too far from Briarwood, which is also good news.

As for the health of the Parish, he says it is rather satisfactory, with "high blood", - the negro form for high blood pressure, being the most prevalent real or imagined problem at the moment. At St. Mathew's clinic this morning he said a colored lady explained symptoms of her present misery in this fashion: "Doctor, I've got indigestion in the front of my stomach where it jus' rattles around, and before I knows it, it seems to fade out and then answers itself from my back."

I think Aurelia must have been suffering from some similar complain yesterday, although she expressed herself more graphically.

"Good morning, Aurelia, how are you feeling," said I.

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Francois. You know I et some peppers for my supper last night and it looks like I can jus' hear them things a-sizzlin' in my guts."

Alright.

3101

I asked Mr. Knipmayer if he had learned anything about the number of negroes who had registered in town to vote in the Parish the last of the month. He thought something over twelve hundred had been successful in getting their names properly entered. He says it is the custom of the Registrar to ask each prospective voter with which party he is affiliated. One lady responded promptly: "High Blood", - which was something of a surprise. It is said the lady's name was not entered.

It was an interesting coincidence this morning that the only letter I was bringing with me from the Post Office was from Carolyn when I met pilgrims at the front gate, - acquaintances of Carolyn, who live in Marshall. Twice before they have been in this locality, hoping to make the front gate but with no luck. I was glad I happened along for they were charming people and I am never too busy to do a round with people who are genuinely interested.

I awakened a little earlier than usual this dawning. From where I slept, I could easily be disturbed by anything foreign floating in on the air current running between my door giving on the front gallery and the casement on the back. I didn't even have to open an eye to figure out that good old Dora had been consorting with skunks during the night and had returned to park her hips on my doorstep. Accordingly I breezed up the road a little earlier this morning, - and a little faster, - to keep ahead of the animal who smelled to high heaven.

The radio last night had remarked that a cool mass of air was heading down from Canada, and as by anticipation, a cool breeze was already a-stir. It made work the more pleasant, especially after I got Dora properly parked on the far side of the wind. But I was surprised to see how each spadeful of dirt tended to go flying across the terrace with every turn of the instrument. The ground is so dry that the earth is precisely the consistency of talcum powder, and I could readily imagine what a dust bowl looked like, once it got to blowing.

If memory serves, a congress of librarians are scheduled to hold forth at the college in Natchitoches this coming week. I believe Essae Mae wrote a month or so ago that it would be from the 8th to the 14th, and as I responded by inviting her to stay at Melrose, I reckon we may be looking for her on Sunday. I reckon she was so busy with the Legislature she didn't get around to say Yes and When. This annual conclave is always addressed by a few interesting personalities who will probably be under Essae Mae's wing, and the social side will probably include time out in remote Melrose so even without ante bellum costumes, we shall probably have ample opportunity to dispense hospitalities as from Sunday forward.....

3102

Friday, August 6th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Thirty million times would be insufficient to express my pleasure in receiving your registered envelope in this morning's post.

What with the first bales tumbling out of the gin today, Mr. Brew was caught short at his noon conference, and so I am guaranteed another fine sitting on the morrow. We covered the first two pages today, and the remained with enclosures, I have set aside for the morrow, and I shall refer to the same in my week end epistle.

I appreciate your kindness in advising me promptly regarding the absence of one leaflet in the ordered progression. My note of yesterday explains the absence, and your remark, - how keen and helpful was your observation, - that I had mentioned a caller just as I had foled up the Memorandum, no doubt account in part for the slip up, what with the letter I had enclosed for your reading probably being the reason why the address I put on the envelope was such as it was.

You are ever so noble to acquaint me with the Adamic news items, so pertinent to contemporary Congressional doings. It is interesting how G. R. S.'s gift fitted right into the general trend of the times. Personally, I would have difficulty in finding anything vaguely sympathetic to Communism in My Native Land, but, of course, for some people, it would be enough that Mr. Adamic criticized the Fascist regime in his homeland to label him something just as violent on the Left, although I must add that I never have been able to figure out why the press and radio keep referring to the present Russian regime as Communist when it is so plain that it is quite the opposite.

You ask my advise in the nightgown department. I am glad to tell you what I can. The lady, I should say, is about Himalya's height but not quite so hippy. I think a cotton one would please her ever so much. Sometimes she wears sleeveless (forgive the extra "s") ones and sometimes ones with sleeves. In spite of the recent heat which she dislikes so much, she has been wearing long sleeves, which I don't understand, but possibly that is merely a passing whim. In the Spring, I heard her say she was getting short of gowns, and so far as I know, her supply has not been replenished. But regardless of style or pattern, it is the thought of you for her that will please her the most, and it is quite possible

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she will treasure it so much that she will stow it away in her
armoire of precious keepsakes, to serve as a reminder of your
kindness every time she goes through her several treasures.

I am delighted to have such interesting news from Anita.
If memory serves, they are to have their new apartment in
July, and, assuming things went according to Hoyle, they
are now established, - as perhaps further pages in your
today's letter may indicate when I get to them on the morrow.

I am wondering if mail to the occupied countries continues
to be censored. Surely the news items from the Potsdam
area shed a light on Russian occupied territory, the
like of which I had not heard before. Thank Heavens
Anita got away from that place when she did, and I certainly
hope she will never return so long as it is under the paw
of the Bear.

Today's pilgrims included a group of some 40 or 50
ladies and gentlemen of color, - a group that was most heartening
and disappointing at the same moment. They were delightful
people but such a large number of people makes it impossible to
find time to talk with any of the individuals for more than
a moment, and that is always regretful for me. They were
people active in educational circles, representing colleges
in Mississippi, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Louisiana. They
were ever so much interested in what they saw and their
inquiries regarding historical and architectural aspects of
the place gave a stimulation to the tour that has never been
equalled in my experience with other groups. I know
one or two of the heads of schools who were here and I shall
write them, asking the names and addresses of as many of the
party as can be supplied, after which I shall write to these
people, inviting them to pass this way again whenever they
chance to be in the region so I may give them more personal
attention and give them more intimate glimpses of some of the
local interiors, etc.

I continue reading from Roy Chapman Andrews and from
Professor Osborne, covering expeditions into the Gobi
Desert in search of material for the American Museum of
Natural History. I was struck by the remark that jays
were found in Mongolia, a region I had always supposed too
rough for those vicious pirates. There are many references
to the old trade routes and again I found myself wondering
if I would enjoy Marco Polo's account of his journey to Cathay.
How much like yesterday seems Marco Polo's presence in Mongolia
when one contemplates it with the millions of years previous the
dinosaurs which the expedition sought were busy in the same
place.

Again my thanks for your nice letter and how impatiently
I await the morrow for its further reading and reference to
the enclosures.....

3104

Sunday, August 8th, 1948.

Memorandum:

And so, what with Arenbourg's birth day just being
celebrated in so far as the promise of more lovely things
to be planted thereabouts this autumn, I went there this morning
before sun up, just to sit for a little while.

It was ever so pleasant and peaceful and withal ever so
friendly in spirit, what with all its slowly advancing plants being
so much a part of one Lydia who through one medium and another, has
put so much of her heart and soul in the place.

I hope I never reach the point where I must forever be
worrying about weeds and never take time to relax and enjoy
the flowers. Six days are sufficient to labor with my spade,
and I propose to reserve at least one day in seven, devoting my
hours at Arenbourg whole-heartedly to the spirit of the place.

I may have mentioned the other day that Roy Hauser of
Beridder, La., acknowledged receipt of our order for ten persimmons
for November delivery. These are the oriental variety, taller than
the American the latter inclining toward less height and more
girth. The difference between these two varieties might roughly
be compared to the differences in shape between the maple tree and
the Lombardy poplar. The fruit of the oriental is smaller than
the native, the former being about the size of a peach while
the native suggests a large tomato or apple in size. The
main point in using the oriental ones, however, is not at all for
the fruit but for the height of the tree which will give greater
emphasis to the beginning of the drive at the entrance on the
Bermuda Road, the turn of the drive by the old raggedy house, and
the end of the drive by the Alphonse gate. That would require six,
and the other four would be used to further identify the drive where
it separates Units Nos. 2 and 3, and the entrance to Unit No. 1 at
the same place, but on the opposite side of the drive. Thus
the drive eventually will be harmonious in its planting of fruit
trees, the pears, native and oriental persimmons alternating, with
the pears carrying the burden of the floral display in the spring,
the persimmons having very unostentatious blossoms, while they
would make up in their decorative element by introducing a
lush orange color in autumn when the native trees hang heavy with
large orange colored globes, scattered at random over the round
trees the smaller oriental fruit in opulent clusters, spread over
and through the multi-colored autumn leaves, hanging in great swags
about these svelt sentinels.

In spite of the extraordinary heat and dry period we are going

3105

through, it looks as though one of the oak trees on the terrace, planted with a view to ultimately shading la maison de la reine, is going to survive. It is only two or three feet tall at present, but it will grow. In Unit No. 1, by some miracle, at least half the Louisiana Switch Cane has pulled through, I believe, too. I shall re-plant the skips this Winter so our green curtain, cutting off the public road, will rise more or less in a straight line. The four mimosas, although they naturally haven't grown too much under existing circumstances, seem to be doing alright, and although some of the crepe myrtle on the curves of the half moons, are going to come through, I believe, even though some of them will have to begin putting out at ground surface next year. I think I mentioned I had in mind to put another half circle just behind them of Chinese magnolias, the latter for Spring delights, the crepe myrtle for full summer. I wonder why I always capitalize the seasons.

The growth of the mimosas and the pecanec in Unit No. 1 will determine in part how the unit itself will eventually shape up. The semi-circles (elephant traps) are being so planted that the curve in each will reflect itself prettily in the pools when we get water, but I am planting in such a fashion, so that if we finally decide to eliminate the elephant traps as reflecting pools and convert them into green grass, we can do so easily enough by merely taking the earth from the big square or oblong which the traps adjoin at the North and South ends, making this central green-sward a square pool, with the half moons of crepe myrtle and magnolias as more remote back drops.

And whatever decision we finally make in this matter, the plants and trees will have grown sufficiently in the mean time so that if we decide to put up buildings of one kind or another in each of the four corners of Unit No. 1, they will find themselves then set in a verdure that will give them quiet privacy, with glimpses of one house to be seen by the other only at opposite corners of the square or oblong, - the semi-circular plantings now being effected neatly shutting off the view of the houses, - the one from the other, in the adjoining right angle.

But you must forgive me for having thus rattled along at such a great rate, but after all, it is a happy day for Arenbourg, thanks to you, and I like to talk about these little plans with you, for its only the sharing that counts.

I'm so glad to have additional news in the balance of your letter about doings abroad. Only through you do I have a glimpse of such circumstances, say, as what happened economically, when the new currency went into effect. I'm sorry the Memorandum to you and Anita was torn up when I mis-mailed it, but I shall make it a point to dash off another little note for her shortly.

I am re-reading Mr. A. Scourby's rendition of Dostievski's The Brothers Karamazov, and wondering if I find parts of it so true to life because I find their family name might well have been spelled with an H. Of course the local features and plots are quite different, but there are sufficient parallels to make me smile as I read the one and witness the other.....

3106

*Francois Mignon
Matchez, La.*

Monday, August 9th, 1948.

Memorandum:

I suspect the Weather Man is trying to boost our morale by his daily declaration that cloudy skies and scattered showers are the order of the day. In reality the skies remain cloudless and the heat maintains its extraordinary level.

You have already received yesterday's Memorandum, together with the note for Anita, written after I had folded up last night, - and then unfolded. A couple of interruptions brought breaks that were not well joined together, I think, and if you would care to fix up the thing a little by making a transcriptio eliminating some of the repeated phrases, errors in spelling, etc., I should feel ever so indebted to you.

Last August cotton harvesting got under way on the 29th, but this year we got going, as of today. The heat, bursting the bowls prematurely, accounts for the approximate three week's difference. Somebody told me Melrose brought about 100 day workers from Matchitoches today which, with perhaps twice that number living on the plantation, ought to start the gin chugging along furiously. If the cotton can be picked before a rain hits it, the cotton buyers allow a much higher rate per bale, and so I suppose J. H. is going after the lint full tilt, and since it is now too late for a rain to do any good in filling out the pecanec, he probably is hoping it may not rain until October or November when the crop should be about finished. I continue to hold the thought in the opposite direction, however, since he can much better stand the loss in grade that Arenbourg can take a wilting lily.

I shall be interested to see what happens along about Wednesday, for many of my friends tell me they aren't dreaming of working Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, - what with "So-say-shun" going full blast at that time. There is always something so paradoxical and puzzling, - and at the same time heartening, when such attitudes are maintained. Obviously this is the season when the negro makes the biggest slice of his income for the entire year, and yet he hesitates not at all, - I don't know, perhaps he doesn't even bother to stop to think, but however that may be, the picking of cotton isn't going to hinder him in the slightest from having his annual frolic at "So-say-shun", and there is something about that complete disregard for circumstances that I love.

3018

3107

Madam Regard is up and about again. I saw her a few minutes today. She recalled to my mind a letter she failed to receive some months back. On May 7th, her daughter living some 35 miles below Alexandria, put a five dollar bill in an envelope, together with a Mother's Day greeting, and sent the same along to the Post Office by a little colored boy she didn't know who chanced to be passing her home. A couple weeks later she asked her mother if she had received it. Madam Regard had not. Her daughter didn't remember the identity of the passing colored boy so couldn't ask him about it. A day or two ago, these three months later, the letter came safely to Madam Regard's true hand. It was in perfect condition and bore the cancellation date of May 7th from the Post Office where she had asked the colored boy to deliver it. The five dollar bill was intact. Isn't it odd how once in a while a piece of mail can somehow get lost along the way with nothing to suggest where or how it got stalled.

I send along the enclosure, primarily for the unexpected address. I recall having received a letter from Elizabeth Brandon Stanton once addressed to me at Cane River, Louisiana. Somehow I have a feeling these people are not too deeply dyed Southerners, and I feel quite certain they do not stem from ante bellum Louisiana. Perhaps they are ante bellum Texans. The tell-tale absence of the Mr. in the salutation reveals much. For myself, I have always marveled at the 20th century American manifestation of friendliness which speaks for itself so often in people naturally calling each other by their first names on their first meeting. Lots of times I think this custom does a heap in breaking down reserve barriers and making new-comers feel ever so much at home. But in my case it never produced that particular effect, and I'm so 18th century that it is only with studied effort that I can force myself to indulge in it on occasion. In reading B. L. C. Wailes' Diary of the 1850 period, it never seemed odd to me that in jotting down his daily journal he should refer to his wife as "Mrs. Wailes". Mr. Bachelier has two or three times remarked to me that it seems so odd that being such good friends, I always address him as "Mr. Bachelier". I must try to develop the habit of calling him Joachim, - or however he spells it, but it is going to be a struggle on my part, but if will make him the happier, that will suit me just fine, - but in spite of that he will not seem a bit closer as a friend, so far as my own feelings are concerned. Of the present generation in Louisiana, it is customary for intimate friends to call each other by their first names, but the older generation still prefixes the Mr. or Miss, even with brothers and sisters. For instance, Miss Louise "utler of the Cottage always refers to her brother as Mr. Bob. What I love is to hear respectful young darbies address their elders by their nicknames, as Mr. Puny or Mr. Bluff.....

3018

3108

Tuesday, August 10th, 1948.

Memorandum: And so I telephoned Mrs. J. H. Williams of Matchitoches this morning because she is a nice person and knows everything that is going on. And I asked her if she had seen or heard anything of la belle Essae Mae. She said she had and had asked her what was new at Melrose, assuming she was staying here, and that the lady told her she didn't know anything because she hadn't stopped off here because she hadn't received any response to her June letter where she had written of her schedule to be in this area in August.

So that accounts for all the quiet last week end. And so I asked la Williams, - should she see la Culver today, to recommend on my behalf that she get off her high horse, - or perhaps mount said steed, and pilot her hips in this general direction. At the same time, I took typewriter in hand and wrote another letter to Essae Mae at Matchitoches, saying as much, but couched in less slap-stick phraseology.

How well do I remember having written her when her June letter arrived. It was at the season when this machine was kicking up, and I recall so distinctly having written much, only to discover that the type had all been hitting on the same spot, so that I had to do the whole business over again. Perhaps the error came in posting the darned thing, and having made one mistake recently I shall always assume I made another in this instance, although it might well have gone the same mysterious way as la Regard's mother's day mail. Be that as it may, we shall probably be hearing from the lady shortly.

A card, posted from Charlottesville, Va., came today, carrying the picture of Monticello on its reverse. It was from Joe and Juanita Henry who visited the place on their way to New York. They expressed enchantment with the same. And then it came to mind that Celeste was perfectly enchanted with the place, too, and is forever talking about it, - and Juanita is ever so much like Celeste. And I knew Joe would like it because he is mechanically minded, and everyone of that turn of mind is always carried away by all the extraordinary Jeffersonian gadgets in evidence at the Little Mountain. And all such considerations led me to conclude that of all the historical mansions in America that I ever heard of,

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Montecello seems to delight the greatest number of people, which, I suppose, is due in large part, to the versatility of its builder. It would be perfectly natural, for example, that someone like Egon should adore the place, but it is somewhat remarkable that all the Madam Egons I know seem equally swept away by the charm of the place, even though their photographic plates are not especially impressionable to values of any particular type.

From what I have read of the period, I gather that the two American personalities of the latter 18th century who made the greatest impression on Europeans were Washington and Franklin. I don't know why, but it has always seemed to me that John Adams and Jefferson never made quite so definite a dent. Perhaps this in part is due to the fact that Washington and Franklin moved on the European stage, - or cast their shadows over it, at the most favorable time for making themselves felt, while John Adams and Jefferson, coming just a little later when things were approaching an uproar, the local giants left little room for the two latter to appear to advantage. But be that as it may, the more I think of what was bubbling both here and abroad at the time, it is ever so clear in my mind that at the close of the 18th century, national boundaries and differences in nationalities didn't count for half so much as at other periods, for somehow it seems to me that the spirit of the age and the civilization spreading from Europe to the Eastern American seaboard somehow made everyone touched by it somehow akin, regardless of birth and chance situation of residence, thus making it possible for say, the Walpoles, the Franklins the Mozarts, the Vigee-Lebruns to appear in any country and find themselves almost equally at home in company with the cultivated of the nationals of whatever country.

Well, Lord, I certainly got off the track, thanks to one post card, but I like to speculate on such matters with you. After all, who else would listen to such speculations, and who else would understand what was being said. Each century produces something so precious as a heritage for those coming after, and yet isn't it astonishing how few people even care to consider the treasures thus created and passed along for their use, --and so little use, misere, ever seeming to be made of them.

The heat continues unabated. For the cotton pickers there is a breeze which probably helps them much, but it is devastating to the floral department, for it is exactly like the breath from an oven moving across the land. But eventually the rains will come, and we shall probably be surprised to discover how many things have survived, --including "us-es".

3110

Dora 8/8

Wednesday, August 11th, 1948.

Memorandum:

And so yesterday the thermometer stood at 113 and today at 115, while the Weather Man promises us that tomorrow will be continued fair and warmer, which, you'll agree, is just dandy.

Along about 9 or 9:30 this morning, as I was passing through the front gardens, somebody called: "You-hoooo", - and lo! it was Essae "ae". She had not received my letter of yesterday, but had driven down regardless, bringing along three ladies with her, one from Louisiana, one from Alabama and I know not whence the third.

They remained until noon, and I had no opportunity to speak with Essae "ae" alone, so got little beyond general amenities. I gather, however, that Governor Long is not so sympathetic toward the Library as the late Huey P. was, but I didn't learn what was allowed the State Library from the current budget, but nothing very staggering, I think.

Essae "ae" wants to come here for a few days in October, following her return from Denver or some such place, and proposes bringing Lois Lester and Mary Daggett to spend a few days. I think I may have mentioned La Daggett in former Memos. She is the head of the Civil Law Department, I believe, of the L. S. U. Law School. I should particularly like to talk with her since everyone in L. S. U. must be jumping crooked these days, what with former Senator Fredericks slated for Mr. Long's satrap in the State's educational institutions.

Essae "ae" says that Helen Ferris is scheduled to appear on some program at Southwestern College at Lafayette, La., in November, and that she wants to come up here for a day or two while down this way. It looks as though we had been have some new ante bellum costumes contrived, what with all the social doings in the offing. My one and only concern will be to see to it that La Culver and La Ramsey don't converge on the spot at the same time, for while both of them would be perfect ladies, neither of them would be happy as companions for the same week-end. Another thing to be avoided in the same set up is having Helen Baldwin and Helen Ferris here at the same time, too, for while they would hit it off fine together, those two ladies have somehow come to occupy a composite picture of one individual in the Madam's mind, and I'm afraid she might feel a bit jolted, should the single impression separate into two distinct individuals before her very eyes. I used to try to help her keep them separate, but finally gave up when she seemed ever so sure that the letters from Helen Baldwin, posted in New York, - I should have said Helen Ferris, - in New York, were from the same person who sometimes wrote her from Texas.

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3111

While the ladies were chatting with the Madam, I had a telephone from Sarah Jones, second in command at the State Library, and an old friend of Mr. Pipes in the days when he lived on Lake St. John, hard by Ferriday, La. Sarah wanted to know if I would receive the State delegation of librarians, currently in conclave at Natchitoches. I didn't mention I had four of her acquaintances here at the time. I said I would entertain them later in the week, and so I shall have about a hundred ladies and gentlemen on my lap before the week has come to a close, and I certainly hope things may have cooled off a little before I undertake a song and dance for such an assembly. I set the hour for after the Madam's bed time, and so they will have an opportunity to stroll about both before sundown and after moon up, which ought to be rather pleasant, - if some of them don't take a page from my kitten and plunge into the empty well shaft.

I declare the approach to "So-say-shun" is so odd on the part of some of my colored acquaintances that I know not how to reconcile their attitudes. Those who are picking madly are making about \$5.00 a day, but what with the excessive heat, they incline toward folding up at first dark instead of hitting the big road up "So-say-shun" way. Then there is another group who, because of the enervation induced by the heat, aren't picking cotton at all, but are regretting the fact that while their energy is adequate to make the journey four or five miles on foot to the festivities, they discover at the end of the day that they lack the where-withal to revel in the fish-fry, once they arrive on the spot. It's all so humiliating, and how they are going to solve their respective problems, only God knows.

From the enclosure, you will note we might do well to exchange blocks of weather, as between Louisiana and Oklahoma. From the sketchy reference to politics, I gather we might also be able to exchange some political ideas to advantage, - to my advantage, at least. The radio gives so little space to the Wallace program that I have but a limited concept of what trend it is taking, but from what I do hear of it, I conclude that it embraces many excellent points that seem to be lost or wilfully covered by the opposition, thanks to the presence of a somewhat curious "Russian approach." There must be some middle of the road, as between the Wallace idealism and the Pegler sneer. For years Pegler has demonstrated that he is one of the cleverest columnists in the country. But, like Senator Taft, he is too clever in that he seems to have no scruples (on) in trotting out a millions facts which when improperly arranged by himself, invariably creates an altogether false conclusion or creates an impression entirely at variance with the truth. In American politics, the progressive party as always included planks in its platform that eventually the other parties were forced to lift wholesale on the demands of the electorate. Herefor I don't believe we ought to dismiss Mr. Wallace's ideas with too complete a sweep, and I must write in an attempt to convert Wora.....

3112

0116

Thursday, August 12th, 1948.

It certainly must be tiresome, merely reading it, but the Alexandria Station has just reported today as the hottest of the year, not to mention 6,000 acres of forest blazing in the Flatwood area, about 6 or 10 miles due west of Gorham. If and when a West wind should start blowing, we ought to get a sun screen of smoke if not of clouds. You may recall in yesterday's enclosure from Wora, he mentioned an ante bellum diarist who frequently referred to smokey weather when foreseeing rain. The diarist was Isaac Erwin and I always wondered if burning forests in those days, when so much forest was burned to clear land, was actually the element he saw in the heavens.

It was so good of you to take time out in your lunch time on Monday to drop me such a sweet note of condolence regarding the missing memorandum. Let's not give the matter much thought, for even the risk of error in no way deprives me of the pleasure of sharing items with you, and, in reality, I think the present slip up was smoothed over without any jolt at all.

It was Knipmayer Day and the doctor came early because he couldn't do much at his clinic at St. Mathew's today. He said the extraordinary dust from the cars turning in to St. Mathew's Church yard where "So-say-shun" is in full swing made it impossible for him to do anything much in his laboratory into which the fine dust sifted so that even the making of bandages, - or applying them to patients, was an unsatisfactory business.

Of medical news in the Parish, he had this to say. Each month one doctor in the Parish gives a dinner for all his fellow practitioners. I asked it was purely social. He said it was not, but rather an effort on the part of the Natchitoches doctors to get opposition well organized among themselves against socialized medicine. I think that is interesting, especially in a Parish where there is such a scarcity of physicians and all of them are getting rich by such leaps and bounds. Obviously their monthly dinners are not held in any effort to guard potential patients against health insurance but rather to forestall any effort on the part of the Government to keep the local medicine men from "making a killing". He said Dr. Worsley did not attend. I shall write to her before another mail goes forward, congratulating her on abstaining, but suggesting in would be a wonderful opportunity to play the role made famous or infamous by one Elizabeth Bentley, reporting the doings, not to Uncle Joe, but to me.

3113

Dr. Knaipmayer had one hilarious report from Ty-po Plantation. He told me that after Sam Tobin had gone on his honeymoon with his Natshitoches bride, the former Miss Lindsey, he received a telephone call from his ex wife, the newly married Mrs. Billy Lecaze, who explained to him that she felt he had really made a mistake in marrying a second time, and that possibly she had, too, and that perhaps they should both divorce their present mates, and so re-marry each other. All that from a granddaughter of the late Alphonse Prudhomme. Dr. K. said that Sam's answer was to the effect that his wife's suggestion was premature, since he was just starting out on his second honeymoon, and that he would think the matter over and let her know his decision on his return. Perhaps he, too, will end up by having his cake, shall we say, and eating it, too.

I continue reading from The Brothers Karamazov, relishing Mr. Scourby's rendition. Last night I re-read that section wherein Ivan tells his story of The Grand Inquisitor, the point of which is to show that the most stunning thing Christ did about religion was to take men out of lading strings, - all the Mosaic don'ts, and set him up as a free agent to make his own choices in human relations. The Golden Rule, come to think of it, does leave it to the individual too use his own imagination in treating other people as he would like to be treated. And the point Ivan is trying to make is that by and large, people don't want to be free to make their own decisions, but much prefer some agency like the Roman Catholic Church which will tell them precisely what they may and may not do, and thus free them of using their own minds and hearts to make their own decisions. I had never thought of the matter along this particular line before, and can't imagine why I didn't the last time I read this book. I shall ponder on the matter further and shall probably return to it again before long, - so brace yourself.

While I think of it, I want to refer to the hundred or so negroes who are brought down from Natshitoches to Melrose to pick cotton each morning, and returned to town in the evening. It has always interested me just how one goes about scooping up a hundred town negroes, what with their innate individualism, disregard for appointments, etc. It is done this way:- the planter contacts some negro living in town who has some influence over friends and neighbors, and this person is paid ten cents per head per day for each cotton picker who is at the assembly point by a certain hour each morning. J. H.'s present town agent is one Kate Curry, a big old Aunt Jemima who lived on Little River for years but moved to town in the 1940's. All planters count up the number of pickers who clamber into the truck or trucks in the morning and the agent is paid forthwith. But Kate Curry prefers to handle her business differently, for not only does she assemble her youths and maidens but she accompanies them to Melrose, spending the day in the fields with them, and "worryin' 'em" if they don't pick as fast as she thinks they should. She is really quite a character, and employer and employees all seem crazy about her. The current has gone off. - forgive extra errors.....

3114

Memorandum:

Friday, the 13th, and it has no terrors for Pat, for he was born today, some 19 or 20 years back, which chanced to be a Friday, too. Therefore he didn't seem to give the calendar much thought when he headed for town today for an operation which this evening's report states was entirely satisfactory.

About a hundred librarians came a little after six, and there were so many old and new friends, we spent much time touring and talking so that the moon made the gardens rather pretty, what with all the gay frocks dattig about under the trees, before they left.

Of course my patient was in bed and asleep before they arrived and none of the Henrys were at home, so I had only the guests to bore when giving them a little sketch of the history of the place before the tour started. When there is a large group, I like this method the best, for it enables smaller groups to wander about at will, and at the same time affords me an opportunity to join first one and then another for a chat that is a little more personal than shouting at a hundred altogether.

I think I mentioned I wrote last night's Memorandum in the dark. The electric current had gone off at 7 p.m. It came back on at 7 o'clock this morning. My patient, much used to a battery of fans, seemed much enervated today. I got behind with my Reading Machine and radio, but aside from that, - what with a nice moon, I didn't mind it much, even though the thermometer remained in the upper 80's. But the killing part of the thing came to light later this morning when the head of the generating station explained that the lights had gone off at 7 o'clock but service had been restore within a half hour, - only they forgot to slam on the switch that carries the current to Melrose and "a Cote Joyeuse."

Off to the South West one can see low lying white clouds, which must be smoke from the burning forests behind Worham. The radio says the fires are being fought by ground crews directed by air planes overhead. But it must be a hot job on the ground, for today's thermometer stood at 107 at noon, and it didn't get cooler around three or four o'clock.

But the heat had one good effect for the residents of Melrose. This morning there was some talk about a desire to go to

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"So-say-shun", and so J. H. paid off all the cotton pickers resident on Melrose. The pickers from "atchitoches, however, remained as their town "So-say-shun" doesn't meet this week. The gin crew, however, staid on the job, and the bales are rolling. The builders of the new Melrose garage also staid on the job, but J. H. remarked that it was too hot for anyone to work and so far as he cared, they might all knock off.

And so tonight the fish-fry, the watermelon, the cold drink department must be doing a gigantic business. Twice during the day negro friends passed by my house to invite me to go with them but I declined because of the impending librarians. I should rather like to go tomorrow night and hear the year's funerals preached but the Weather Man says Saturday and Sunday will be fair and warmer, and I reckon I might do as well at wilting here under an electric fan as going five miles up the road to swelter in a frame building under a tin roof.

There was a card from the Joe Henrys today. They report enjoying themselves much in Manhattan, and the ferry ride to Staten Island and the Grand Central Oyster Bar seemed to be things they liked a lot. The cool of the bay really sounds wonderful from where I sit, and the mountains of ice that used to bank the Oyster Bar are soothing memories, too. And speaking of eh Oyster Bar recalls to mind how much I used to like their clams on the half shell and their calm stews. Down this way one never seems to find clams, and I assume that perhaps the water of the Gulf which seems fine for oysters must be too warm for clams. Probably Bird's eye or some such has frozen ones, but I never did see any, - and I like them.

And that reminds me of another thing I never see, - this time in the soft drink department. Why is it that down this way one never sees anything with chocolate as a flavor. The Garage does a gigantic business in all kinds of Coca-Cola, Pepsicola (my particular drink), R. C. Orange, Grape and heaven knows what all, and yet never an thing with a chocolate base. Is it possible that chocolate requires a milk body to make it palatable. If so, I can see why it wouldn't lend itself for drinks of this type, but otherwise I can't imagine.

I always used to be impressed by the greater quantity of soft drinks sold in the South than in the North, but after I had been dehydrated under a sub-tropical sun, I understood the reason, - the need for more frequent drinking than in milder climes. It must be the tendency for people to need more liquids in the summer forms a part of the reason why so much more coffee is drunk in the winter down this way, too, - all during the day, for it probably merely carries along the summer necessity for greater in-take of liquids.

I'm afraid this is pretty much of a hodge-podge letter, but I haven't the excuse for discomfort. The electric fan is going a mile a minute, and right now I'm heading for an ice box and some ice cold milk....

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Brianwood 8/7/48 3116

memorandum:

How nice to have your elegant letter in Saturday's post.

I wish I knew the answers to some of the questions regarding the dedication in The Unhurried Years, but I can't seem to place the people. Eventually I shall round them up, and pass them along so you may make notations in your volume if you should care to.

You ask if I have ever read the Captain Richard Butler Diary, and I regret to say that I haven't. I was once loaned the original which I was very anxious to go into, but after keeping it a month, I felt constrained to return it, - although with the greatest reluctance, for during that time no one had found an opportunity to read me a line. I know it has been published at least once, - possibly twice, and eventually on the gallery at Arenbourg we shall have to go into it, for I'm sure it must contained a heap of interesting particulars, many of which ought to illumine the early chapters of The Unhurried Years. Whenever possible, I like to take my research from original Diaries, since descendants are sometimes prone to fix up the text a little here and there. Possibly we may eventually be able to borrow the original again, and that will be even better, - except for poor you, if said Captain didn't write with too clear a hand.

I sincerely appreciate your splendid resume of the latter chapters of Dr. Butler's volume, for I have never heard anything but scraps from the first three chapters. In an earlier letter you spoke of the Huntington letters, his planting of the oaks, - which still stand, etc. I am wondering if I mentioned in a Memorandum reaching you that this Mr. Huntington married a daughter of Sir William Dunbar of The Forest, a neighboring plantation of Laurel Hill, - perhaps 5 or 6 miles nearer Natchez. I believe this gentleman later took up his residence in New Orleans, but I am hazy as to details. For some reason the present day Dunbars always act as though they never heard of the man when his name is mentioned. And they may well be acting in good faith, for some of the Dunbars know mighty little about their ancestors. I reckon I have mentioned before that I once asked a lady, on being presented, if she were a descendant of Sir William or of

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Robert Dunbar, both of whom came to Natchez about the same time, were equally successful, but were no kin.

"Sir William or Robert", the lady asked with a query.
"Dear me, was there more than one Dunbar in ante bellum Natchez".

She was Miss Emily Dunbar, and really didn't know there had been but a single family, and couldn't tell for the life of her from which she descended.

On the home front, we were comparatively alone today. Pat is still in the hospital, and getting along fine. Dan is in Dallas for several days, and J. H. flew to Washington, D. C. last night. "Always be sure to have a heap of children so you will be sure to have some always around when you get old."

I may have mentioned Tony, nephew of Zeline and Joe Rocque, a 40 or 50-ish person, definitely on the dull side, but kind enough. He usually brings a few eggs from Celine to the Madam about once a week, and usually stays for 15 minutes to chat a bit with her. I chanced to be sitting with her on Saturday afternoon when Tony came in. The Madam gossiped with him as usual, asking after Celine and Joe and other news up and down the river. Conversation dragged a little, and then, to my complete surprise and Tony's puzzlement, the Madam quite casually inquired of her visitor:

"They tell me Tony sometimes steals money from Celine and gambles with it. Do you think that is so."

Tony, simple soul to start with, didn't seem to be able to grasp about whom the Madam was making inquiry. Obviously the Madam herself had forgotten the identity of her caller.

"Who was that you was talkin' about, Miss Henry", inquired Tony.

"Why, of course, about Tony, -- you know, -- the one who takes care of Celine and Joe."

Tony was more dumbfounded than ever, and then after a vast struggle with his imagination, he declared:

"I guess you must be talking about my brother, Edward, who lives further up the road. He used to gamble but no more."

And immediately I went into a big inquiry about his brother's new tractor, and so on and so forth, and before we knew it, we were far, far up the road, and the Madam, without a bat of an eyelash, was again conscious of the identity of her visitor, but quite unmindful, apparently, of the slap unwittingly administered Tony.

Last night's radio reported ten forest fires in neighboring Parishes, and in the same broadcast reported ten main highways in Oklahoma under water from recent torrential rains. Oh, brother, how neatly these two states could share their wares. We continue to swelter.

Saw D. and a moment today. He has been taking air

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Monday, August 16th, 1948.

Memorandum:

In yesterday's note, if memory serves, I think I ran off the page while referring to Dr. Rand's recent air photos.

He boarded a plane at Alexandria and had it fly him up Red River to the point where the bed of Cane River joins Red. He then followed Cane and took a flock of photographs at 400 feet, -- an altitude sufficiently low, I should imagine, to get quite clear impressions. He hasn't had them developed as yet, but I am hoping they turn out nicely and that a duplicate set may be obtainable, for I should ever so much like you to have such an opportunity to "look-see".

He told me that after doing Cane River, he swung over the Gorham area where many forest fires were afloat. What he was particularly interested in is the so-called Sunken Forest in that area. In 1811, -- when the Nicholas Roosevelts were on their famous trip by the first steamboat down the Mississippi, a terrific earthquake struck the Middle West and elevated valleys into mountains and depressed mountains into valleys with the greatest abandon, -- and all the way from Louisiana to Tennessee, -- if not further. It was during that 1811 earthquake that a great amphitheatre was formed in the Gorham region, with limestone cliffs roughly demarking a great circle, several miles in diameter, into the midst of which the forest sank. Dr. Rand says that from the air one can see the phenomenon, -- or the results of it, with ease. I think we shall both hage to take a glance at it eventually, don't you think so.

Of things closer to home, I would remark that Celeste is on the lookout for a pair of Wedgewood vases or urns, -- for her mantle piece. She likes the dark blue background with the white figures, and something that would stand perhaps a foot or 18 inches in heights. I think she hopes to run across a pair for around \$50.00 or \$75.00. Inquiry was made at Macy's China Department about these items, but Macy reports "on soap". I told Celeste I would remark up on the fact to you, -- that she is interested, -- and should you ever chance to run across anything vaguely corresponding to the above description, Celeste would be enchanted to learn about it. It seems to me that in the 1930's, such a pair used to sell for around \$125.00, so, -- should one ever discover any in these rash times, I suppose they ought to be priced at about four times that amount. I thought I would mention the matter to you, however, foreseeing the possibility that during the ensuing year, -- there is no rush on Celeste's part, and she may get something else, but just in case you should chance to see a pair, it would be nice if

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you would ask the price.

Post "So-say-shun" recollections come to hand as this or that local citizen drops by to call. Everything seems to have gone along nicely, but I haven't found anyone yet to tell me in detail about the funeral sermons preached on Saturday night. All agree that everyone wonders how the various little botths sold such marvelous fried chicken, hamburgers, fish-fry, etc., in such generous portions at such reasonable prices, - an expression of wonder which is unique, it seems to me, in regard to quantities and prices at such affairs generally. Probably after the debits and credits had been struck, - if ever, - the individual Baptist "sistern and brethern" didn't find great profit, but unlike better business people, they probably added in an item, labeled "Good Times" on the credit side, and so even though the money may have been scant in the exchequer, utter satisfaction with the gains in food and good will was evident.

Sometimes on Sunday mornings, I sleep a little later than usual, not be-stirring myself often before 5:30. But yesterday morning at 4:45 a tapping on my window awakened me. It was Puny who had returned from "So-say-shun" around 11:30, and retired immediately. But along about 4 a.m., the twins came in, - Little King and Big Six. They had brought five school girls with them, and the seven youths and maidens rigged up a radio on their front gallery and headed in for a frolic of dancing and general frivolity. And that got into Puny's hair and after complaining to his wife, Zelma, about the doings of her children at such a strange hour, - and to no avail, he got up and dressed, heading out for he knew not where, but arriving shortly afterward on my gallery.

Although he had probably eaten enough at St. Mathews the night before, I thought what he needed more than anything else was a good breakfast, and so I sent him to the big house to undertake the same, while I jumped into a bath. He was back in 20 minutes with a big tray of hot coffee, toast and scrambled eggs, and an unusually large pitcher of chocolate. While I was dressing, he set two little tables on the front gallery along side the big old banana leaves, and there, well before the sun climbed over the African House to the east, we breakfasted in fine style, - he the happier for the cool quiet of my gallery, and I enchanted to have been waked a little earlier than usual on the Sabbath.

With three or four exceptions, all the cabins in this area are without water in their cisterns, necessitating the toating of river water in buckets for home use. That must represent quite a labor, especially in these hot times. I hope most of the people are boiling the water thus drawn when being used for drinking, - but I'm quite sure the water is drunk first, and thoughts of boiling it are coming to the fore afterward. It's really wonderful what little sickness results from such business. Fortunately the melrose cisterns are immense and there is never a shortage in water, - which, like the fried chicken of the current season, goes on forever....

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Tuesday, August 17th, 1948.

Memorandum:

I have your particularly precious letter of Sunday, last past, and find myself quite unequal to an expression of joy for all the particulars and parallels it contained.

With anticipation being such a thrilling element, what greater pleasure could I enjoy at the moment than to contemplate the time when Arenbourg shall have a gallery and we can share the M. C. - T. J. correspondence together.

It is so good of you to send along the quotations, and the biographic notes. I had never known before about M. C.'s intention to do a mural depicting Monticello and T. J.'s "Seminary". What a pity that sometime during the 13 years M. C. survived him, she was unable to get some idea of the little Mountain and so preserve it in oils in such a remote situation, - remote from Charlottesville, at least, although I am not quite sure just where the building was located, - the one whose walls she embellished.

And wasn't it odd that her husband should have died on the 4th of July, and that those two old friends, T. J. and John Adams, should have followed three years later on the same month and day.

Now easily understandable is their friendship, and particularly in view of their mutual interest in Art and Architecture. How nice it is to know that they had those happy picnics in each other's company in Paris days, with their little excursions to St. Germain-en-Lay, Marly and all. To me, there is always something marvelously romantic about kindred souls, born so far apart, should by some miracle, converge in a heavenly course, so that by coming into conjunction with each other, the lights from both souls flame the brighter when together, and leave in their passing a mark and a monument for those coming later to revel in and to admire.

That your letter about the Master of the Little Mountain should have come to hand today is particularly fortunate for me, since the Joe Henry's arrived quite unexpectedly during the night, and at dinner today were busy as bees extolling the charms of Monticello which they visited while on their way North. I had not read your letter before dinner, and so, without realizing it during conversation, the ground was beautifully ploughed and harrowed for the delicious subject matter awaiting me in your letter when I reached the quiet of my own house.

The mail had brought other letters, - Dora, Madam Marco, etc., but after reading yours, I sent Mr. Brew on his way, feeling that my pleasure for one day was complete, and no other communication could today be added to my heart's treasure, already complete.

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The Madam had quite a heavy mail today, most of it containing promises, - or threats, - of impending visits. Mr. Bachelier hazards the last of next week. Miss Kate Perkins says she will make it "the last of the week of August 24th", - which seems an odd expression, for my calendar, at least, says that August 24th is on a Tuesday, and unlikely to be styled the week of anything, in usual parlance. Little Miss Alberta writes that she looks forward to a couple of weeks in the last half of September. But further on in her letter she says she feels she must be at home during the last two weeks in September when the Garden Club is going to do something or other to her courtyard, - and thereby little Miss A. seems to cancel the time designated in the earlier part of her letter, - which is both typical and of not the slightest importance.

Rudolph says he and Jimmy Cunningham are coming on September 3rd while Annie Gibson might come before school starts. Pat is hoping to have some of his college friends here before L. S. U. opens in September, and what with my hopes that Carolyn and Helen may come some time during this same period and Essae Mae is threatening to come for a few days with some of her friends, it looks as though the Southern hospitality section ought to be going full blast from almost any time from here on out.

To be perfectly frank, I don't mind saying that except for Carolyn or Carolyn and Helen with whom I want to work, I could pass all the rest by until colder weather sets in. Fortunately the thermometer today touched only the lower 90's, and the respite is wonderful, for I discover that even as an extra inch on or off a man's nose, so a difference of ten degrees of oven heat, make a whale of a difference.

I thought of J. H. late last night when a Washington, D. C. broadcast stated that prominent pecan growers are meeting in the Capitol to confer with the Government regarding the 54 million extra pounds, - could it have been tons, - of pecanes this year. Hopes for a floor price being put under the crop was mentioned, with the Government, if it goes into the market, using the pecanes to augment the diet of school children, etc. Of course that would please the pecan growers much, since it would practically guarantee a fat price for their product, and a heap of children ought to find additional incentive for going to school if the rest of the school diet could be stepped up to harmonize with the dessert department.

J. H. telephoned today that he is flying back tonight, so I reckon we may have further particulars in the morning.

There's a big old moon tonight, and when I am done with a few letters, I shall think of M. and T. J. and sit for a while on the terrace of Arebourg before folding, and somehow it will not seem that I am alone.

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Essae Mae Culver
8/17/48
Dora 8/15

August 18th, 1948.

memorandum:

The enclosure speaks for itself. What's good about it is the fact that it is as illustrative as a letter could be of Essae Mae's failure to comprehend the local situation.

When she was at Melrose last week, it happened that Sarah Jones telephoned me, asking about receiving the hundred librarians.

On leaving the big house, - on her way to the car, Essae Mae got an earful of the arrangements and why the Madam would not be advised of the matter, - since such a delegation would tire her too much, - and that accordingly, nothing would be said to her about it.

I think it marvelous, therefore that the enclosed letter should have been written her.

The enclosure from Dora seems quite gay. I intended saying to you the other day that when Sarah Jones was here with the librarians, she remarked to me that she had recently had a letter from Dora who had remarked that he was still working in the same place. I was thereupon engulfed by a dozen dizzy pilgrims, dying to know the wherefore of some object or other and I never did get back to chat with Sarah again.

Pat came down for dinner today, - just for a little change, - and returned to town this evening. The stitches will be removed within two or three days and then he will return to remain until college opens. He liked what I had to tell him from Dora's letter about all the Oklahoma ladies screaming to the point of throwing themselves from upper windows. I really think that is hilarious.

I also told him of an experience Celeste's maid had the other day, which isn't funny, but does illustrate what people may do in a panic. The girl lives on the far bank of Cane River, opposite Melrose. The bank drops off abruptly on that side of the river, going down about 60 feet beneath the river's surface. The girl crosses the river each morning in a boat, one end of which is usually drawn up on the bank, the other end out in the water. The other morning she was a little late in starting for work, and gave the boat a big push, hoping in gayly as she did so. She took the five or six steps to the far end of the boat, picked up the paddle and sat down preparatory to wending her way across the river. But before the paddle had had made two strokes,

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the girl as terror stricken to see a moccasin's head peeping up from the bottom of the boat over which she had just stepped. Apparently it never occurred to her to use the paddle to whack the serpent over the head, and of course she would have sufficient self control to paddle back to shore. She merely let out one big whoop, flung the paddle into the air, and plunged overboard. Not being able to swim, she floundered around for a moment or two, and finally caught hold of the boat and somehow managed to get back to shore. Why she wasn't drowned, God alone knows, and what seems a little odd is that she should have been so panic-stricken over the snake, for it was she and her mother who banked the moccasin and ground it up for seasoning when they were doctoring the Pink Sausages with Paris Green for the gentleman I spoke of some time ago.

In my current reading of Dostievski, I find myself wondering why Hollywood has done Tolstoy's Anna Karenina several times, but, so far as I know, haven't seemed to do anything else much. Ever so vaguely it seems to me I remember as a child seeing The Brothers Karamazov in some "blood and thunder" film, starring someone like Nedda Starr, but it may have been Korentzer's Sonata or some other thing. With all the talk about Russia in the present decade, it seems to me Dostievski ought to go over with a bang, and as the Brothers might be treated either as an out-and-out murder mystery for the detective story readers or as a study in psychology for a more limited circle, I should imagine it would be quite easy for those who fashion such pieces to turn the thing inside out, wrong side around, other end to, - and bring forth a box-office smash hit.

All the recent flurry of excitement in East 61st Street as between the third story windows and the grounds of the Soviet Consulate recalls to mind the frequent times I used to pass the place on my way to the boy friend's apartment which was in a building on the same side of the street, perhaps one or two door further East. In those years, the location of the Russian Consulate seemed odd, for somehow I always associated Consulates with business districts. Later, as I recall, the French Consulate contemplated moving to East 94th Street, - which seemed even more odd. But I left town when that was stewing, and so can't say if it ever went so far up town or not.

I inadvertently made the most insulting of social blunders today which, when recalled to the "adam's attention later, sent her into gales or is it galls of laughter. When I dropped by the big house this morning, I found her chatting with a large colored lady. It turned out she was a former cook, and a grand one, by the name of Pearly-Mae. I didn't notice her hair-do particularly although I suppose it was as kinky as average, - and sub-consciously the question flashed through my mind: - Why is it white ladies are forever struggling to get their straight hair into kinks while colored ladies, who hate kinks, are always wearing themselves out to get their perruques straight.

"I, m Pearly-Mae", the lady said.

How nice to see you.
Pearly-Mae.

3124

Thursday, August 19th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Tonight's radio report from New York speaks of showers today. We didn't get one. The Weather Man predicts fair and warmer weather for Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Alright.

You will enjoy Miss Nellie's letter enclosed herewith. I am so enchanted to learn that Mr. Gerard Brandon is still up and doing. Isn't it odd that his daughter in law should have reported him dead.

And you'll like the gentle admonition I received from Miss Nellie regarding the impossibility for me to have a correct view point on the racial question. This is in response, I presume, to a paragraph in a letter of mine to her wherein I remarked that some Natchitoches Parish negroes are registering, which seems odd and novel for this locality where for years the white trash of the hills who can neither read nor write have been voting right along while the people of color in the river bottoms who are university graduates, have not been permitted to cast a ballot.

I love the old ambush the die-hard Southerners always fall back on, - the necessity of having been born here to understand the question. In making my response to Miss Nellie's letter, I was just itching to remark that the Pipes family lived in Natchez before the Brandons left Ireland, and since my position harmonizes with that of Mr. Pipes, could both he and I be wrong. But that would be unkind to her, and so I just skipped all reference to the subject.

The information about the swimming pool is depressing indeed. It will be a crime if they ever do stack up bathing beauties along the gallery of Connolly's Tavern. It occurs to me, however, that the Tavern owns an adjoining lot running to Franklin Street, and on a level far below the gardens of Connolly's Tavern, and it may be the pool will be constructed there, - I hope, - and that will not be so bad, although it does seem a pity that even that garden has to be sacrificed for a so-called pool. Much of the planting of that garden was done under my supervision in 1941, and much of the plants were hauled from Melrose to Natchez to create the spot, enhancing the expanse and beauty of the setting of the old Tavern itself. But destruction of this garden, although pretty enough, is not so regrettable, just so long as the gardens immediately surrounding the ancient building are not disturbed.

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J. H. has been so busy since his return from Washington that I haven't had more of a glimpse of him than of a passing passenger pigeon. He says the pecane growers did a heap of talking but, as usually is the case, the matter was "taken under advisement" by officials of the Agriculture Department.

And speaking of this meeting, the Madam ran across some reference to it today in the Times-Picayune. Somehow her mind doesn't always sense when she has come to the end of one news story; and, in spite of the difference in type, she sometimes reads it slap along for several sentences without seeming to realize a different news item has been encountered. In today's brief reading of the meeting of the pecane growers in Washington, she proceeded with measured pace, and the thing ended up along this line:

"Among those attending the Washington conference of leading pecane growers of the South were Mr. So-and-So, and Mr. So-and-So, and according to the Associated Press, Secretary Branon will confer on the matter further following next week's Cabinet meeting at the White House. And according to one expert, the temperature of birds range from 104 to 106".

I must eventually take Mr. H.'s temperature and see if the thermometer indicates he's humane or feathered.

Today's pilgrims included a Mr. and Mrs. Glendenning who are from New Orleans but once lived in Donaldsonville, La., and are kin to a flock of the Erwins, Varretts and so on. The Madam was too warm to bother receiving them, but I did what I could for them in straightening out some of their family tree.

Mr. Glendenning told me Barnett Kane told him about the mulatto church at Delrose, - St. Augustin, and pointed out that it is the only church in the world that has three entrances, - one for mulattoes, one for white people and one for negroes. He asked me if he might see the church, and if the story might be true. I told him he might see the church, and that the story was a story. It illustrates Mr. Kane's imagination in writing history, - and I must say it is a gay story. The truth is there is but one entrance and that is for mulattoes, although one or two white people use the same portal, - Celeste and Adam Regard, who are about the only white communicants.

The Glendennings also told me they visited Miss Sarah Smith at Asphodel on July 4th, and on reaching home in New Orleans, they received word Miss Sarah had just died. They said her nephew who inherits the place says it would take fifty thousand dollars to restore, and will therefore be permitted to sink into decay. I knew Miss Sarah and loved Asphodel. You may remember Lyle's account of his visit there with Eddy Dwyham, - in Old Louisiana.....

3126

Friday, August 20th, 1948.

Memorandum:

To hand your elegant letter of Monday and Tuesday, together with the notes on the Hancock property and Madam's Roosevelt's article. I have read the letter and am saving the Hancock notes and the clipping for the morrow, - and a million thanks for all.

I had thought of the Reissigs recently and intended asking for particulars about them, when Mr. full information came to hand. If the both of them are contented that is all that matters, and I am always glad for such harmonies. I am a little curious to know if the Hoffmans are still in good standing, or if, as I shouldn't be surprised, the friendship was cut completely, following the Reissig reconciliation.

I am genuinely sorry to learn the reformation in the case of L. J.'s brother didn't last. I have heard of so many such reformations but never one that was permanent. It goes without saying, as you suggest, that it is undoubtedly a case for the psychologists. In the case of Lyle's excessive drinking, I always thought it had some relation, - although possibly minor, with his unusual inclination to procrastinate. For example, on many occasions I have seen him arise in the morning, determined to write a terribly important letter, and he would get so far as inserting the sheet of paper in the typewriter. But before hitting the first lick, he would say: "Oh, hell! Let's have a drink first!" - and sometimes that would be before he had had his breakfast, - and with one drink taken care of, a second and third would follow, until dinner or visitors or some such, would make it possible for him to put off doing the work at hand.

Having met Willie once, I feel quite certain that (interruption) - I think their cases were not at all parallel, still, I have no doubt that there is something in Willie's mental operations that, if they could be adjusted, might tend to solve his tendency to keep carousing on, - and then slipping off, - the water wagon.

Poor L. J., - I feel so sorry for her, for the illness of a near and dear relative is always much worse on the observer than the victim.

Do I understand that Alse's husband is dead? I hadn't realized that before your letter acquainted me with the fact. I think I

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saw her once or twice in 46th Street, - or could I be wrong. Life in so many parts of Europe must be so difficult for so many people, but somehow, while one pities the dolt-ish peasants, one's heart seems doubly full for those with finer feelings who have tasted the refinements of civilization in a higher degree, and then through circumstances beyond their control, are plunged down to earth and the black crusts of despair.

From the Glendennings yesterday, I learned something about the present status of Oakley which I must pass along to Miss Nellie. You may recall she mentioned her intention to lend her portraits of her grandfather and his parents, when this shrine was opened by the State this autumn as a memorial to Audubon. The Glendennings were at Oakley in July and said it was well nigh impossible to get from the road to the house because of the inordinate tangle of weeds, and that nothing whatsoever had been done by way of restoration since the State purchased this old plantation home where Audubon had taught, - and not liked it.

I had hoped the restoration might have been effected before Earle Long took office, for I haven't a doubt he never even heard of James J. Audubon, and would probably veto any appropriation of funds that wouldn't guarantee wonderful pork barrel fishing for his hill billy lieutenants. Of course it is doubtful if Jimmie Davis, who occupied the Governor's chair before Mr. Long knew anything more about Audubon than his successor, but under Davis there was a chance that some State official might know and even care to get the work undertaken, - and even completed, - but obviously that didn't happen. It's really wonderful that any old plantation homes are left in Louisiana, what with the indifference of the private owners and the ignorance, rapacity and indifference of State employees.

I may have mentioned last year that Weeks Hall offered to give the State his beautifully maintained home, - Shadows on the Teche, but the Legislature refused to accept the gift, - it is said, on the grounds "that it was an old building". Isn't that marvelous.

As I recall, Eddie Snyder made a pretty good likeness of Oakley for Old Louisiana. It is not my favorite house, in fact it is so much inclined to be rather gaunt that I don't like it much. But it was unmistakably an interesting place and an historic one, and Miss Lucy Mathews whom I visited there one or two occasions gave infinite charm to the domaine. Twice I was at Oakley when the marvelous little Grand Duke cape jessamines were in bloom, myriads of them and all about the size of a nickel, - so small and yet so sweet, the air was weighted down with their perfume. Miss Lucy gave me a couple roots and, - pardon me while I pause to knock wood, - thus far I have succeeded in keeping them growing nicely, and Arenbourg will be the nicer because of this Audubon souvenir, don't you think so..

3128

Sunday, August 22nd, 1948.

Memorandum:

A quiet week end, albeit a hot one.

On Saturday, I chanced to cross the pasture, lying between Cane River and Little River, just this side of the pecane orchards. Because of the unusual dryness, great cracks have appeared in the earth, each running in no particular direction, probably a mile or two in length, and frequently crossing each other. In some stretches, they are from three to five inches in width, and the Lord, alone, knows how deep. I found a couple of boys, lying flat on the ground, gazing down into the depths of the earth. They had headed home from fishing and one of them, in handing his knife to the other, had dropped it, and it had gone down into one of these fissures. Wondering if they could touch bottom, they had tied one end of the fishpole to the other, but a void still yawned below that depth. Obviously the jack knife was gone forever.

Oldsters say it will require more than a week of solid rain to close up these great gaps.

Among Saturday's visitors was Dr. Postel of the L. S. U. Medical School. I was delighted to see him, and we chatted for two or three hours. He has been doing research in the Library of Congress, the University of North Carolina (where he found stacks of Prudhomme account books, etc.), the Department of Archives at Jackson, Miss., at Natchez and in Natchitoches.

Next summer he hopes to take time out to put much of this material, - medicine and slavery, - into book form. I recommended some two or three possible places on Cane River, but told him frankly Melrose, under present circumstances, would not be receiving guests, - for, I should hasten to observe, - he plans to have his wife and five small children with him.

Later when I told the Madam of his hopes for next summer, she made the somewhat caustic observation that he might well begin by chloroforming the five children.

In the Natchitoches Court House, he had gone through some of the ante bellum inventories, which I have never had an opportunity to go over. I was particularly interested in the 1850 settlement of the Jean Baptiste Prudhomme plantation, - Live Oak, - a mile or two above Natchitoches. Because of their ages, which

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must have been very advanced, some of the slaves, were set down at fifty cent and seventy five cents, and I cannot imagine anyone so rash as to buy either a human being or an animal at such a figure.

But I was particularly fascinated by the case of Phillipe, a blacksmith. He was listed at twenty-five cents, with the proviso that the purchaser should assume the \$400.00 charges of a New Orleans hospital for treatment accorded Phillipe.

Whatever the hospital did for poor Phillipe, I'm afraid there wasn't much left of him when they got through. I had no idea that one could run up such a bill for hospitalization in the 1850's, or that slaves were taken all the way from La Cote Joyeuse to New Orleans for treatment.

Don't you think we shall eventually have to examine some of these records on our own hook, and draw our own conclusions, - or at least indulge in our own speculations as to further particulars, his associates and other antebellum residents of this region, as revealed by these inventories and estate settlements.

The Postell arrival took place just before my secretary arrived, in consequence whereof I was forced to hold the Hancock notes and the copy of "My Day" until our next sitting, which will be Monday - Mr. Brew's and mine, I mean. I regretted the interruption of routine, but if there had to be one, I'm glad it was from such a source.

A letter from Shreveport indicates the Winks will spend next week end here. I hope a heap of other people come, too, so that the individual racket may be drowned in the general hubbub.

Regrettably I finished the Brothers Karamazov. But I stumbled over some short things by James Thurber, which were definitely a contrast to the strange Russian doings just laid aside. I like his hilarious account of the unicorn in the Garden, which I presume you know, - and like, - too.

I also dipped into "Living Rasure" by Sanderson, being an account of a British scientific expedition in Central America in search of strange insects, mammals, etc. I found this book on the dull side, due in part, perhaps, to the fact that I was sleepy.

In your last letter, you spoke so delightfully of your visit to the Botanical Gardens on the preceeding Sunday, and with the first stars beginning to appear this Sunday evening, my thoughts turn toward the Gardens, hoping you have had another outing, - there or elsewhere, with evidences of the heavens and rural settings with the scope of your week end diversions, - they mean so very much when the week sees one hemmed in by so much cement and steel.....

Eleanor Worsley 3130

8/21/48

1818

Monday, August 23rd, 1948.

Memorandum:

From the enclosure, you will note everything seems to be going along alright with the lady doctor.

I had a touch of neuralgia a week or so ago, and wrote to bless the lady for having given me some excellent anti pain pills a year or so ago.

The Clarisse she refers to is the self same person who last year came to Melrose one Sunday afternoon in a drunken condition. Apparently she has turned over no new leaf. I have no idea of her age, although a son of hers in his 20's was married this summer, so I reckon she must be as old as the lady doctor anyway.

Mrs. Rand came by this afternoon for a little visit, bringing a niece, Lota Blythe, of California, with her. Ed Rand has been in the hospital for a week or two, terribly high fever, and no diagnosis indicates what's wrong with him.

Lota Blythe is a nice person. I imagine she may teach school in Santa Anna, California. She told me of one Ruby Goodwin, a negress with many children, living in Santa Anna. Ruby has written a book which Lota took in manuscript to New York to have read. I took Ruby's address and will write her a little note, perhaps tonight or tomorrow, but Heaven alone knows why or what I shall say, other than "Hail!"

Ruby's grandfather was a slave in Virginia. When the Confederate War was over, it suddenly occurred to him he needed a last name, and being able to read, he strolled down the street, looking for one that pleased him. His eye fell upon a sign bearing the word "Berkley", and Berkley automatically became his last name. His grandson studied for the Law and on graduating decided to set up an office somewhere in California, where he now practices. Of all things, the name of the town which Lawyer Berkley practices is Berkley, California.

In today's post came a letter from Miss Kate Perkins of Monroe, La. saying she would be here on Saturday. She enclosed two letters from a man who for 20 years has been head of the schools in Arcadia, La. Miss Kate says he isn't so fine as some people she knows, but that he is very nice, but not so fine as I. Poor man, he's sure in a hard way.

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He writes Miss Kate he has lost one eye and fears he is about to loose the other. She thought I might write him. I did, immediately. In fact I wrote him and his wife, - Mr. and Mrs. O. R. Hestor, and I found it easy remembering his initials, being the last two letters of his name. I told him a heap about the glories of the Reading Machine and after that switched off on to the Dormons, some of whose ancestors, - and the sisters, too, having lived in Arcadia, La., once upon a time. From there on out, the letter flowed along like hot butter in July. From the tone of his letters to Miss Kate, the man was obviously feeling sorry for himself, - justified but unwise, but after he gets through reading my diatribe, he's going to feel a heap better, for he will swell all over with superiority after discovering what a silly business I can make in pushing a pen.

I hadn't seen Peter for three or four days, but bumped in to him at the gin today. I asked him how he had made out over the week end. He said he had got some fish on Friday but his wife hadn't cook it until Sunday, and he guessed it wasn't so good, for later, after drinking some beer and some wine, he kept feeling like "I'se gwine to heave". Fish exposed without ice for three days at current thermometer readings really ought to do something in a big way for anyone, I should imagine, even without the beer-wine chaser. Practically all the colored people I know, - their cisterns entirely without water, are all going to the river for drinking water. I certainly hope no fever contamination gets going under such circumstances, for the results would certainly be disastrous.

Something hilarious happened this morning while the Madam and I were running through the mail. We both were sitting on her sofa, and not stirring about any when Lo! the sofa collapsed and we both rolled into a tangle on the floor, hurting neither of us, except that we both were weak from merriment before we extricated ourselves. It was a large sofa which she has used daily for years, and I haven't the slightest notion why the legs should suddenly crumble. I must ask the darkies about this matter, for you may be sure they will have some wonderful signs and portents attached to foretell no end of things therefrom.

A box of fine pears came today from Mr. Bachelier. They have a marvelous aroma and taste marvelous raw. I think these are the variety he spoke to me about and offered a couple of yong ones for planting at Arenbourg. He has what he styles a remarkably fine recipe for cooking them, or baking them or whatever, and I believe milk is part of the process, and he declares they are "a la Vatel", - although not in that precise phrase, for I suspect he may never have stumbled over Fouquet's prize chef. I certainly am going to get the recipe, and shall send the same along to you when it comes to hand. I like pears alright, but would never push grandma out the window for them, although I have always secretly hoped that some day I would discover a recipe that would make them extra special and devastating, withal, for grandma....

Issac Mae 8/22
Robina 8/24

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Tuesday, August 24th, 1948.

Memorandum:

I don't understand the enclosure very well. I didn't know we had invited la belle Essae Mae for the Sunday following the "librarian conclave in Hatchitoches, but I gather Essae Mae thinks I did, - but what either of us thinks now really doesn't matter.

In speaking of little Miss Lota Blythe in yesterday's note, I failed to mention one point that may eventually be of interest. When she told me she lived in Santa Anna, California, I jumped at the geography. For the past 5 or 6 years I have been patiently awaiting the day when someone passing this way would be heading for the neighborhood of Coronado, - and here was the lady from Santa Anna, only fifty miles from the home town of the granddaughter of the Black Swan.

You may recall how abruptly correspondence between Mrs. Anne Andrews and me was broken off when, quite inadvertently, I presented data which, to the lady at least, seemed to indicate that, contrary to her statement, she was not a descendant of Eliza Greenfield, "The Black Swan", but Elizabeth Greenfield, - mistress of that remarkable person of color.

And now here comes la Blythe who tells me she would relish running over to Coronado with a view to calling on Miss Anne and her daughter, Miss Minerva. I told her quite frankly that if she used my name, she certainly wouldn't make the front portal, but she says she believes she can think up some good reason for storming the citadel, and promises she will do her best to view the family portraits and make a copy of the vital statistics in the family Bible, wherein is writ, according to Miss Anne, the outstanding particulars about the life and death of the Black Swan. It will be fun seeing what success, - or lack of it, results from this attempt.

For the life of me, I couldn't remember Miss Minerva's married name, - Streit, or some such, - but I recall the street address, - 1200 Isabella Avenue, and with the balance of the particulars, I reckon the balance of the needed data can be readily fitted in.

And now I want to do a little thinking out loud about Arenbourg.

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After mature contemplation of the matter, I have about come to the conclusion that sometime between January and April, - the dull season on the plantation, we might do well to install a small automatic electric pump. I have no precise figure as to the cost, but one was purchased and installed in one of the camps near "ugabou's house for something under a hundred dollars last year. The thing operates by electricity and current and water begin flowing only when the faucet is turned on, and both cease when the faucet is turned off. The water comes from a pipe placed in Cane River.

In view of the two succeeding seasons of such dryness, it seems to me we are loosing too many plants for lack of water, and even more regrettable, we are loosing too much time, not only in those things that die and must be replaced a year afterward, but also in those things which do not grow for lack of moisture.

I suppose I could have the electricity connected even as do the colored people, and probably get a flat rate of a dollar and a half a month, regardless of amount of current used. Should the next few seasons prove to be fairly damp, we could add to the moisture by added doses, thus producing extraordinary growth, - and should another dry spell develop, we could at least produce a normal development.

When Arenbourg is eventually established, I am hoping we may draw our water from underground, but it will always be comforting to realize we have an auxiliary source of supply, which might be used always for outside needs, pools, watering plants, etc., and even though we might discontinue the engine's use entirely, I suppose we would feel we had got our money's worth from the luxuriance of growth and speed of development resulting from this innovation.

And now I am through talking and thinking out loud. This possibility is something that may be considered for another season or two, for we have made it thus far fairly well, although it would be nice to cut down the time element if possible. And the cost involved doesn't have to be considered this year either, for I can readily obtain whatever charges there may be, as against some special services rendered, should occasion arise. I shall not even mention the matter of making such an installation to J. H. before January, when he may offer some better suggestion, but it means much to me to be able to discuss this matter with you, for just jotting it down in conversation with you somehow seems to give the problem a clarity it lack before. After it rains again, - as it is bound to do eventually, - I'll figure up the actual plant losses, - the span of time lost, of course, cannot be figured, I'll write again on this subject, and perhaps I shall then be able to speak of it more intelligently. And thanks for letting me think out loud...

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Wednesday, August 25th, 1948.

Memorandum: To the Editor, only a few days ago, I had no

You aren't going to believe it, - I scarcely believe it myself, even though I felt it vaguely, - but I'll make the statement regardless: - it sprinkled a little for a few minutes today.

To the square acre, there wasn't enough moisture falling to wash the dust off a crepe myrtle leaf. But the appearance of a cloud was wonderful. Perhaps the old Weather Man was peeping over my shoulder last night as I mumbled around about a pump. However that may be, we have the assurance that it really can drop down a little dew if it makes up its mind, and perhaps before too long we shall get a few bucketsful.

Some day I must do an article, with apologies to old John Bunyon's Pilgrim's Progress, entitling mine Pilgrim Problems. But today's visitors were all especially nice and I enjoyed them all. This morning there were some from South Carolina and later there were some from Atlanta. I learned nothing in particular from them, and I reckon they didn't leave with much more knowledge than when they came, but everything went along ever so smoothly.

In the afternoon, Dr. Rand and Dr. Niessen came to see me, mostly on the social side, although Dr. Niessen did want to learn something about Oakland Plantation, - the Oakland adjoining Laurel Hill, owned by the mulatto, Clara Mazique. Dr. N. fell in love with some of the great camellias that escaped destruction when the Oakland Gardens were put to the plow half a century ago, and as I could help him out on some points, he seemed delighted.

They tried to get me to run in to Watchtloches with them between 3 and 5, but I declined. But I did accept their invitation to have supper with them at 7 o'clock, which I enjoyed ever so much, even though I'm not too crazy about barbecue chicken. The beer was excellent, however, and the salad and hot biscuits, - the latter stirred up by Puny's Zelma, were grand.

To my surprise, Ed Sand was at the camp, having jumped out of his hospital bed but yesterday. I don't understand certain types of people who are at death's door one day and fishing in Cane River the next. Dr. River's of South Western University was the only other person present, - just us five.

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In my opinion, Ed Rand carried off the palm in story telling:

"On her death bed, a wife, troubled by the long feud between her husband and her mother, called her husband to her and said:

"I have one last request to make. On the day of my funeral, please ask my mother to ride with you in the same carriage, as you follow my body to the grave."

"Dear wife," said the husband, "I'll grant this final request, and I shall ask her to accompany me. But I don't mind telling you here and now that it's going to spoil my whole day."

"Alright."

On the more serious side, Dr. Wiessen and I combed many of the ante bellum gardens of Louisiana and Mississippi, prospecting on the probability of rare plants to be found in one place or another. He told me of a lovely plant he had discovered and put into cultivation from Valcour Ayme's Versailles plantation in South Louisiana. He promises one of its off-spring for us at Arenbourg.

At Sir William Dunbar's Forest Plantation, near Natchez, he found the remains of what he considers the earliest conservatory in the great South West. He says that even after this 150 years, it still is in a repairable condition. He knows of another early one in the neighborhood of Monroe, Louisiana. I told him of the foundations of a perfectly elegant round one in the gardens of Routhland at Natchez.

He has visited the extraordinary mansion of Longwood, but never knew about its gardens, and had never heard of Dr. Nutt and his voyages to the Orient in search of rare and exotic plants for Longwood. He was floored when I told him about the ten acre rose garden there. Now he wants to go back and comb its 98 acres thoroughly. He says he has often found some of the finest plants around slave quarters on plantations whose big house has been destroyed and whose gardens given over to the plough. He says it would seem as though there frequently was a negro living in the quarters who loved flowers and would cherish one plant or another, re-setting it by his cabin when the garden of the big house was doomed, so that today we may occasionally find an original plant of great beauty or one of its seedlings still flourishing mightily after the vicissitudes of 90 years.

But it's time to fold, and I do so, "holding the thought" that today's brief sprinkle may return on the morrow with renewed vigor and force for the benefit of our little friends at Arenbourg....

Dora 8/23

3136

Thursday, August 26th, 1948.

Memorandum:

May I tell you that along about 4 o'clock this morning, it actually rained a nice little shower.

Tonight's radion says that poor you in Manhattan have today been having some of our 100 averages, and I'm genuinely sorry for you, since having been through the mill, I have some idea of what your current sweltering is like.

A cloud covering shut out the blue all day in these parts, and the humidity was near the 100 mark, - and that was good, for without any sun, and with no breeze, what moisture did come down had a perfect opportunity to sink into the ground. I had hoped there might be sufficient dampness to make weed pulling possible at Arenbourg, but it is still too dry for that. But even though the drink were but a swallow, it is enough to give some of our wavering children a new lease on life.

Thursday, and Knipmayer day, and the good doctor inquired if we had heard of the Watchitoches murder that had occurred a couple of days ago. We had not.

It was a husband and wife thing, and they were colored, I suppose.

You're going to love the wife's name, - Etta Pearl Gustin. Etta Pearl, --how are you feeling.

Well, anyhoo, there must have been some lack of domestic felicity between Herr and Frau Gustin, as demonstrated by the fact that Etta Pearl heated four buckets of water to the boiling point, - simultaneously, and one, two, three, four, poured them over her oyster man. Heaven alone knows that or how much that did for him, but just to make sure, Etta Pearl thereupon pumped some lead into his par-boiled chest.

It is Dr. Knipmayer's duty in keeping the vital statistics

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of the Parrish to indicate especial notations in deaths by violence.

He accordingly communicated with the Sheriff's office and was requested to state on the Death Certificate that the death was caused by gun shot, and to describe the case as that of "Justifiable Murder".

Of course, for myself, I'm just dying to know what in the world Mr. Gustin could possibly have done that, in the eyes of the Law, would have justified Etta Pearl to slay him thus. I can readily imagine plenty of things which might have called forth the use of the familar blunderbuss, but the aggravation exceeds anything I can picture to myself when I learn from the authorities that the lady was justified in dumping four pails of boiling water over her victim before letting go with the heavy artillery.

In only that non-blond little Miss Elizabeth Bentley weren't so busy, I might get her to spy out some of these mighty particulars for me in "atchitoches", but obviously she is having such a wonderful time in "The Kiss and Tell Department" with the UnAmerican Activities Committee I could never lure her from Washington, and so, unless extremely lucky, we shall probably live and die without ever learning what in the world so up-set Etta Pearl, save, perhaps, her diet.

Dora's letter seems quite gay. The place he refers to is not Asphodel, but the Cottage, to which I took him and Essie Mae when we called one afternoon on the Lesters at Waverly, - Miss Louise's place being just up the road a mile or so. He is a little off in detail regarding one of Miss Louise's curious habits.

At the Cottage, the Butlers always set a 20 foot table, - which, although beautiful in itself, is a little on the ridiculous when, as so often happens, only Mr. Bob, or at most he and two or three guests grace the board. For as long as anyone can remember, Miss Louise has never joined either her brother or her guests at table, and never eats at the same time. The Cottage still boasts of having no electricity, - although, paradoxically enough, they don't mind a telephone, which they have, and it is with pride they light oil lamps, whereas, if consistent in their ante bellum atmosphere, they certainly should toss out the lamps for candles. But kerosene it is and as the unshaded globes seem to try Miss Louise's eyes, she always holds a plate before her eyes to ward off the direct glow, and sitting in a far corner, - and usually beyond the range of everyone's vision, she carried on a most animated conversation as the others present revel in the cooking which is unfailingly marvelous.

But here we are at the end of the page, and only space to congratulate ourselves and praise God for the rain.....

Sarah Jones 8/23

3138

Friday, August 27th, 1948.

Memorandum:

It goes without saying that the Madam, - not to mention me, was enchanted to have your lovely letter in this morning's post.

I reckon the package you mention will arrive in tomorrow's or Monday's post, and the Madam is as enchanted as a child at the prospect of receiving it.

Neither of us had heard of the Herald Tribune articles you mention. It is so good to have your opinion, so that I shall be able to comprehend a little more fully when passers by mention them. If you have saved them, I reckon it would be better to retain them, since they probably would not get read, were they to come to hand here at the present time. Perhaps at a later sitting, there might be a better opportunity to explore them, and your generosity if offering them now will be doubly appreciated when, eventually, they may be gone into.

And how nice of you to tell us about the new Anne Parrish volume. We had heard nothing of it and were of course all ears. I think the title, - is it "Cloudy Star", - an excellent one, and the story of little Miss Tubman ought to be grand.

If memory serves, you once gave me some particulars about this lady Moses, and wasn't it at Geneva, New York she died and a tablet was inaugurated in her memory. Someday, under quiet auspices, a tour should be made through the Finger Lake region, and at Geneva one ought to view the bronze marker, don't you think. There are so many pleasant places through that region one might view with pleasure, beginning, say, at Asylum, Pa., and moving North Westward strange and delightful situations, both remember and forgotten.

I recall one great square stone house, miles from the main threads of civilization, which I should like to re-visit ever so much. It was forsaken ever so long ago, and I believe its old 1812 garden has long since been deserted. One thing about the place was a pair of brass lions, smaller and more romantic than those pinning down the entrance to the 42nd Street Library. I often think of those lions, wondering if they are still there and contemplating how nicely they might grace the terrace at Arenbourg, should we ever be able to obtain them. Sometimes I contemplate asking a friend, living in the region, if they are still there, but I never quite bring myself to writing, hoping, sometimes, that we might explore the forgotten spot for ourselves in good time.

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Miss Kate Perkins arrived from Monroe, La., this afternoon. It was pleasant to sit with her on the front gallery of the big house, after the Madam had folded up. She is genuinely interested in what goes on in the world and thanks to her acquaintance with State doings, - she was in Baton Rouge attending Legislative sessions in June, - I was able to get a hap of kinks straightened out in my mind. I asked her about the Wallace platform and she told me she thought it contained a number of excellent planks that along about 1952 or 1956 we shall probably find lifted up wholesale and nailed down in either or both the platforms of the Republican and Democratic parties.

It never did rain again, but with the humidity standing at 99 all day, our little friends at Arenbourg undoubtedly benefitted therefrom.

Within a month or two or three, - should I not chance to hear from little Miss Lota Blythe, I shall drop her another note, and since she told me of her enthusiasm for Mr. Jefferson and had never heard of his Correspondence with Marie Cosway, I think it might be a pleasant reminder of that conversation, - not to mention the "Black Swan", - if I could attach the title of the book to my letter. If you should find it convenient between now and November to jot down the exact title and publisher on a little separate slip, I should greatly appreciate your kindness, and I imagine La Lota would be glad to have the same, but please don't go to any trouble about the matter, should the book not be conveniently to hand.

Tonight's radio announces the passing of Charles Evans Hughes. I have always thought of him as one of the world's distinguished citizens. I had the privilege of seeing him perhaps a half dozen times in my life. The personal appearance of the man impressed me much, and particularly the delicate soft pinkness of his skin. His white whiskers somehow harmonized with the tint of his flesh so as to bring to mind a statue of some distinguished classic Greek sculptor. Although there were some people of integrity in Mr. Harding's Cabinet, it was Charles Evans Hughes, I suppose, who did more than any other man in the group to lend respectability to a collection of cheap politicians and crooks, the like of which no one had seen in quite a number of years in such an exalted place. I'm leveling one eye at the hurricane, said to be approaching Floriday waters, hoping it may not reach us in such force as the one did last year about this time, but holding the thought it may merely blow in a few nice buckets of water as a gesture to the nice little shower we had a couple of days ago. You hold the thought, too.....

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Sunday, August 29th, 1948.

My radio says that your neighborhood continues to swelter.

Our heat continues on a parallel with yours, with the humidity standing for days at from 99 to 100. But it isn't so bad on us, for we lack the added wilderness of steel and stone that somehow intensifies yours.

Our Arenbourg children must be doing alright under present circumstances, for we had another little shower of about 10 minutes on Saturday, and what with the humidity still hovering around the saturation point, they are bound to be struggling to make up for lost time.

Our week end passed off comparatively well. The Wenks came on Saturday afternoon with not more than the usual hurly-burly. Miss Kate left Sunday morning, and the Wenks Sunday afternoon. I didn't see much of them. The Madam told me Sister picked on Pat altogether too much, and in consequence the Madam had a headache and folded up around 4 p.m.

Ed Rand passed this way at 3 to invite me to have supper with him and his father and mother at the camp at 5. Had I known my patient was folding up so early, I should have accepted.

Ed had come to see him, too, having heard from his father that there was an unusual gun in the African House which he had seen on Wednesday. Ed is very interested in fire arms, and was delighted to examine this 7 foot piece. I must see if I can dig up some history concerning this ante bellum item. I feel sorry for the person who used it in the old days, especially if he had to carry it very far, for it is very heavy, and with its length greater by a foot than the height of an average man, you can readily picture the burden it represented, and especially so, as the hunter was bound to have carried additional impedimenta in the form of gun powder, shot, etc.

And apropos of nothing at all, this reminds me of something I read in Sanderson's Living Treasure. While searching for various species of bats in Central America, Dr. Sanderson received a letter from an American friend, acquainting him with the simplest and most effective way of securing specimens for his collection. The recommendation appeared so simple that at first the English scientist was inclined to disdain trying it, but later, - without confiding his initial attempt to his associates, he tried it, and

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to his delight, discovered it was ever so efficacious. And so I shall pass it along to you, - just in case you should some day find yourself over in the Botanical Gardens on a bat hunt. All you need is a sling-shot, made by a forked stick and a couple of rubber bands. For shot, one needs but some small pellets, such a B-B shot. When bats appear in your locality, merely shoot the pellets into the air, making no attempt to hit the bats, but merely directing your shots in their general neighborhood. The bat is so adept at snatching off insects on the wing that he has no difficulty in intercepting the passing pellets whose weight, by comparison, is so much greater than the insect he takes it to be, that he is stunned by the pellet as it strikes his open mouth. Thereupon he falls or flutters to the ground, and with sprightly step, your only remaining business is to catch up with him before he sufficiently regains consciousness to take to the air again.

Somehow or other, we seemed to be just out of bats in this region, but there are plenty of chimney sweeps, although I'm not sure the Sanderson method would work so successfully on them. Perhaps I would do better, - if I must take up such business, - to just fall back on the old 7 foot blunderbuss.

I believe it is a generally accepted fact that nearly every individual has a difference concept of money values and surely one type of personality may differ violently with the ideas of another group in the matter of expenditures. In a set up such as the local one where so much wealth is represented, I am frequently astonished, - not by what is squandered but by what ideas come to the surface by way of saving. Pat came to me in confidence a day or two ago, to ask if I was very fond on the airdale. I told him I was. He said one of the boys, - I have no doubt it was Dan, - recommended to Pat that he shoot the dog, as they couldn't afford to feed him. Pat said I could count on him not shooting him. I thanked him. Then he asked me if I really thought the dog was worth anything economically. I told him I thought the dog was of no more value economically than his own memories of childhood, which he probably couldn't mark for much by way of dollars and cents, but which he probably wouldn't put them up for auction, - or murder, - even if such possibilities were possible. I'm certainly glad God doesn't charge us for the magnificent parade of constellations marching nightly across the heavens, for if monetary expense entered into the payment, I'm sure some miser would be contriving to turn off their electric current.

On the radio from 1:00 to 1:30, I heard John Daily, et al, once more burn poor Jeanne d'Arc to the stake. I wonder if this is a repeat, or the inauguration of a new autumn series. And Miss Kate, on our side regarding Madam Roosevelt, told me she understood the latter is to go on the air shortly in a series of broadcasts. Would you know about that. I suppose many of the major programs for the impending season may be expected to get going almost any moment....

Rudolph 8/28

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Monday, August 30th, 1948.

Memorandum:

To hand your elegant letter of Thursday, and I call you thrice noble to have rushed home on such a hot day and still exert sufficient fortitude, - in spite of the impending evening program, to take pen in hand to write such an interesting epistle.

It is so good to know that your plans called for an outing for the week end in the Catskills, and I hope that even though the days may have been warm, the nights possibly evened off a little with the coming of night.

Lord, Lord, but wont those South Americans ever stay home, - or if not stay home, wont they try visiting some other city. I recall distinctly how I used to feel when friends were forever coming to New York from Paris, spending delightful days a-top some wind-swept hotel like the Plaza, and at the close of day, on coming to my house for dinner, announce quite seriously how puzzled they were that New York people found the city too warm in summer time.

And in today's post came your lovely gift for the Madam. She was a little tired from guests over the week end and in consequence of her physical frailty, her emotions were less under control. She never dreamed I saw tears well up in her eyes as she unwrapped your package, saw the lovely gown and read the equally lovely card. Once in a while a letter of a card does something like that to her, and at such time, I naturally leap to cover the quiet weeping. Today I immediately recalled to her mind that years ago at Christmas time Dan had told her that if she would acknowledge some gifts he had received he would give them to her for having carried out the acknowledgement. Accordingly I asked her if I might wear the nightgown if I would acknowledge it in her behalf, and a smile spread over her face in spite of the moisture in the optical action. She finally laughed, but declared with vigor that "somebody will have to acknowledge it's receipt", but that nobody in this world but herself was ever going to wear it. Frankly she was genuinely pleased and ever so touched by your kindness, and many a night henceforth at bed time, - and in between, - she will be thinking of you and your thoughtfulness.

The enclosure from Rudolph speaks for itself. I must write him tonight, recommending the Sept. 6th suggestion, for I should rather see him alone, what with all the comings and goings we have been having.

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I am so glad you mentioned the Herald-Tribune articles on race relations in your letter to the Madam, for it gave us both an opportunity to discuss the matter from such slants as the fact that a great daily should bring forth such data to such a wide spread group of people as it serves, the fact that it comes when Dixiecrats are making such a racket, etc. I think my patient, however, lacks powers of concentration at the present time, - sufficient to read an article, - of a single issue, - straight through, and I'm sure she hasn't the physical stamina to read one of them to me. As for Madam Regard, she is so kind she would gladly read anything I asked her to, even though she might not be interested. But she is developing cataracts and accordingly is permitted to use her eyes very little. Madame Egon, - that is good for Celeste, - would scarcely have time, what with all the parties experienced to be spoken of, those in the immediate future that are to be attended, not to mention those she herself plans from time to time. I really marvel sometimes that one within whose reach is almost everything that could be acquired, is so cursed as to feel constantly impelled to go flying madly through a hollow pipe, called social activity, which boils down to nothing in the end save what delightful things this hostess served, what pretty dresses these or those wore, etc., etc. ad infinitum. Never before this moment did it occur to me how advantageously both she and Sister are situated, so far as having anything desired, including all that goes with the heritage of local prominence, the making of money, etc., - and yet, although so entirely different in everything, yet practically identical in their respective inability to make anything out of such potential power for their own and other people's happiness.

To my own good fortune, a letter in my secretary's hands, is merely a collection of words, thereby giving those who write me the assurance that only I will appreciate their import. Mr. Brew is quite intelligent but merely isn't interested in correspondence. As for reading from the printed word, it's practically no-go, for after a paragraph, - I'm quite sure of boredom, - he complains that a slight pain in his head impells him to lay aside the item at hand, - demonstrating what a Columbia commentator once remarked, to wit: - that it is astonishing to what ends people will go to resist getting an idea.

It has often been with interest that I have read the postal charges on letters in ante bellum days when one could run an account at the Post Office, paying one's bill by the month. I have computed the costs of individual letters in those times, which usually averaged, I believe, about twenty-five cents. In this year of grace one nine four eight, I discover that my in-coming ones come to about the same charge before I get them digested. In 1803 it used to take three days for a letter to travel by horseback to go from Natchez to Natchitoches. It takes the same time 145 years later. From these two examples, you can readily see how far we have advanced.....

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August 31st, 1948. (Tuesday).

Memorandum:

In these parts, the temperature is up, the humidity is down. How does your barometer read.

As for myself, I'm keeping my eye on that East Coast hurricane which now appears to have kept out to sea in the neighborhood of Hatteras. I certainly hope it stays out at sea but passes close enough to shore to bring you all a little cooler weather.

Today was one of those dawn to dusk things that seem to show mighty few results for one's undertakings. It was nice and cool this morning at dawning and I did quite a few things at Arenbourg, but somehow I wasn't ready to leave when it was time to, and the balance of the day I never was able to get back. Perhaps tomorrow's dawn will give me an opportunity to get caught up on satisfaction.

On going to the store with my mail this morning, I bumped into the Bookmobile. Celeste was chatting with them and made the presentations. They were nice girls and gave me the impression they might know something about the insides of books, - a fact that is often too rare with librarians. They asked me if I didn't want to borrow a book from the Bookmobile. I told them I was just contemplating writing to Paton Rouge for one. They assured me that wouldn't do any good since the book would have to come through the Natchitoches branches. Essae Mae and Sarah would both get a kick out of that. And so I told them I might take a quick look at the letters of Mrs. Henry Adams which Miss Kate told me had been lately published. The Bookmobile ladies were entranced at having found a customer and when the thing comes, their delivery of the item will provide me with an opportunity to show them about the place, for it seems they've never been inside the front gate.

Among other visitors today, - or aside from others, came two gentlemen not unknown to me, - Paul Veidth and Dr. William Hogan

They remained too long, but I got quite a few bits of information from them regarding St. Francisville doings.

I think I have mentioned the Paul Veidth determination to get the missing Johnson diary from me. It was my understanding when he opened negotiations that under no circumstance was he to reveal to L. S. U., - for whom he said he was trying to secure it, - the identity of the person with whom he was negotiating

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Dr. Hogan had been here two or three years ago, when trying to purchase the Melrose Library for L. S. U. where he was head of the Department of Archives.

I didn't like it at all that Mr. Veidth had revealed my identity against my wishes, but I didn't give any hint of my reaction. Neither did I tell either of them that the original is not here anyway, but merely a typed transcription and some photostats of the original. They bribed and weeded and carried on, but I merely put them off, saying I would have to consult with the person who shared the manuscript in which our part of the Johnson diary had been used.

They were heading for "atchez tonight. I certainly hope they don't stumble over la Moore, who would most certainly spill the beans.

I learned from them, - for what it is worth, - that Oakley is really going to be restored, even though work hasn't started as yet. It seems to be the pet project of some member of the Legislature who seems to have enough power to put the thing over.

When a mile or two from Asphodel a month or so ago, Mr. Veidth had to stop at a negro cabin to get some water for the radiator of his car. Near the cistern he noticed some old charred papers, and the old negro women told him they were no account, just stacks of papers they had been using for years to start fires, etc. He gave him what was left. They were the 1837 account books, letters, documents, etc., covering the building and operation of "sphodel, with notations by Mr. "endrick's the builder of "sphodel on purchases made in St. Francisville, etc., - manacles for his slaves, and so on.

They told me they had stopped at the Cottage and that Miss Louise is alright but Mr. Bob is bed-ridden, and appears to be on his death bed. Always frightened to death of fire, he astonishes everyone in the house now by smoking one cigarette after another flat on his back and is forever putting scorches on the bed clothes.

I understood them to say that Miss Louise wouldn't sell the Cottage papers to them, but that Dr. Pierce "utler has sold the Laurel Hill papers to L. S. U. I'm wondering if this is possible, and believe not.

Just as they were ready to leave, I asked Dr. Hogan for his address, promising to give him a definite answer within a week regarding what I have of the Johnson material. He said it was Dr. "m. Hogan, Department of History, Tulane University, New Orleans. Well, I said nothing, save repeat it to be sure I was correct, but what I want to know is why "aul "eidth told me he was trying to purchase the stuff for L. S. U., and what has the former Archives Director of L. S. U., but now of Tulane, got to do with the business. Something's out of joint somewhere, and I'm glad I'm not tangled up in it....

Robina 8/30 3146
Kate Perkins 8/31

Wednesday, September 1st, 1948.

Memorandum:

And so yesterday's ballots were counted, - at long last, - today, and our new Senator is none other than son of the late Huey P., so that Louisiana now has both a Governor Long and a Senator Long, which, if you will pardon the dumbness of the remark is much too much.

The larger cities voted heavily in favor of the other candidate, Judge Anon, but Long and God are practically synonymous to the hill billies, and it was the hill billy "arishes that turned the trick.

But in spite of our disappointment in the Senatorial race, we had much to be thankful for in a local judgeship contest. Red River and "atchitoches "arishes were voting for a District Judge with a six year term. Some of Caroline Dormon's kin, - one Lawyer Stevens was contesting with Judge Jones of ill repute for the place. Jones had fought hard for the job he had held once before, - during the former Long regime. I may have remarked seeing him lately at the store where he promised " H., the clerk and me that when elected, he would take care of his friends when they were brought before him. Of course anybody may find himself before the bench, - although I must confess at the time he mentioned it, we hadn't contemplated the prospect seriously. But it is a wonderful Justice that promises exemptions prior to election and commission of unspecified crime. He is the same Judge "ones whom " H. did out of the 40 acre tract in the Gorham tract, following the trial of the "ev. "arks, husband of he Parrish's local poetess. It was he, too, whom Ezra mimics so well, - rapping the bench with his gavel and screaming at an innocent negro: "I'm sending you to jail just to remind all you niggers that this is a white man's world".

Thank the Lord he even seems to have been too much for the hill billies.

I talked with Ezra today to find out how he found the polls conducted when he voted at Montrose yesterday. He said he went at noon and chanced to be the only colored person there, but that everything went off without a ripple. I suppose I should have taken it as a matter of course, but somehow I found myself a little taken a-back when Ezra told me of the separate booth.

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fitted up for the negro voters. Somehow it struck me as funny as it would if the Telephone Company fitted up telephone booths exclusively for the use of colored people, - but for all I know, they may. Anyway, at Montrose the hill billies weren't contaminated by having to vote in the same booth, either before or after a negro had cast a ballot in the same place, and with that comforting thought, they apparently got through the ordeal of voting without too much wear and tear on their uncertain sense of white superiority. So far as I know, and I have asked about at some pains, nothing untoward occurred in the parish on this first day the negroes have cast a ballot in Natchitoches parish since Reconstruction days.

Along about supper time, - the madam's, - which is to say 4:30, the lady doctor dropped in for a little chat. She sat with the madam while I took her assistant, a Miss Weller, on a little tour.

Later she joined us, saying she had come for a couple of reasons, handing me some anodyne pills, just in case neuralgia should sneak up on me. She also said she wanted to apologize for not letting me know before hand that Mr. Veith was heading this way yesterday, but she didn't learn of it until after he was due to be here. She felt responsible for him because the Worsleys had brought him here once.

He said they had been expecting a check from New Orleans, and when a letter arrived from there yesterday, she had opened it without noticing especially to whom it was addressed. It was not for her, contained no check, but did say some rather unpleasant things about her. It was from Mr. Veith to Mr. Worsley.

She told me the two gentlemen failed to see each other, Donald being at Magnolia where he is doing some work for the Hertzogs, and Mr. V. supposing him to be in Natchitoches. I thought there was no need adding fire to the conflagration by remarking that Mr. V. had told me just before leaving Melrose yesterday that he had failed to find Don at Magnolia when looking for him before coming here.

After the ladies had gone I saw the Madam for a few moments before she folded up. She said Dr. Eleanor told her she was ever so pleased with Natchitoches, and as she has several patients who are old members of the College faculty, friends of the madam, they had much to chat about to the Madam's delight.

What a dishy report this has turned out to be. Curious how lightning seldom strikes twice in the same spot, and yet Lestan lived up la Cote Joyeuse such a little piece.....

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Tuesday, September 2nd, 1948.

Memorandum

Alors, "Pluse que princiere, presque 'Royal'".

This is my initial try on my new machine, and already I realize I am going to need a little instruction.

Will you kindly, therefore, bear with me as best you can.

Well, there have been a couple of side lights on the election worthy of reporting.

At Campiti, a small community North of Natchitoches, it is said, some hoodlums warned some negroes approaching the polling place, not to proceed. They accordingly withdrew without entering.

Dr. Knipmayer said his cook told him that on Sunday their minister, a colored, of course, advised his flock to cast their votes without consulting anyone regarding the choice of candidates to be favored, and in case of any disturbance while at the polls, to leave immediately, regardless of whether they had voted or not. I thought that sound advice.

But things took a twist which I found wonderful, and which I mustn't forget to pass along to Dora who, like us, would love it.

Many of the hillbillies, coming down from the heights, were ever so resentful when they saw people of color enter the polling place to vote, and immediately assumed an adamant position, declaring that if negroes were going to vote in this election, they wouldn't. And they stuck to their guns, and didn't.

Don't you think that is wonderful.

If only this position taken in 1948, could become an old custom by 1949, and from there on out, the Long family and their likes might have more difficult going.

That old line about biting off one's nose to spite one's face, I think, was never better illustrated. Now, if only the negroes don't refuse to vote if the hillbillies do.....

I'm reading a nice book about birds and plants, "Footnotes to Nature" by John Kieran. I don't know how his name is spelled but I'm sure you are acquainted with the spelling and know to whom I refer. I believe he used to be on Information Place, and is a popular sports writer.

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His account of the great variety of birds he used to see as a boy in the neighborhood of the Jerome Avenue Reservoir, somehow brought me slap up to your pleasant situation.

I think I have mentioned before that I knew the place before the town moved up there, when there were lovely old estates to the South and West of the Reservoir, and I suppose this must have been about the time the author lived there.

I regret that he ~~se~~ uses pseudonyms for several of his associates in his walks in the woods, although it seems not to difficult for me to identify some of them, Alexander Woolcott, for example, the man who used to preside at the Planetarium, husband of that Indian lady, but the name eludes me momentarily.

He has a very interesting reference to the lovely Franklinia Altamaha which John and William Bartram, or is it Bartrum, Lord, help me, discovered in Georgia at the close of the 18th century. I never cease to wonder at the fact that this spot was the only one this tree was ever found.

It isn't quite so wonderful that Louisiana iris should have been discovered only in Louisiana, but still it is rather remarkable that they shouldn't have been further scattered along the Gulf Coast originally, if not, if fact, in Europe and Asia.

I was enchanted today when Mr. Brew volunteered a story for my delectation. He said to colored gals, young and thinking themselves quite superior, were glancing over magazines and remarking upon the wonders of electricity. One of them declared she thought Mr. Edison was just wonderful for what he did with electricity in lighting homes and bringing forth the movies, and all, while the other said she thought Marconi was even more wonderful for having pulled wireless out of the air. Sitting over in the corner was an old Aunt Jemima, chewing madly as she sewed.

"Tawl can have your Mr. Ediston and Mr. Marconi," she observed. "For me, I thinks Levi Garrett who invented this here snuff was the best man of 'em all."

Mr. Brew liked that one, and I liked it because he did.

Going back to Bartrum, I think it was nice of him to honor Dr. Franklin and the Altamaha River, in naming his discovery. Perhaps we should try a growing one on Arenbourg, although they are difficult to get started, but they are wonderful. So many things to talk about.....

3150

Friday, September 3rd, 1948.

Memorandum

How nice to have the elegant photographs, accompanying your equally elegant letter in today's post.

I cherish them both and like them the more because in both cases, they suggest a measure of relaxation, which even the floral surroundings in the Botanical Garden somehow suggests, even though the place, not far beyond its confines, is teeming with humanity.

In the aquatic number, you somehow seem a little more pensive, and I like to think this may be due in part to the fact that the presence of water suggests to your mind another stretch of water just below the terrace at Arenbourg.

In the other item, which I find ever so gay, even your canine companion seems bubbling with happiness, and quite contented with his mistress. I'm keeping both pictures here on my desk beside my machine, resting just inside the cover of Marly which is my constant companion and through which I turn daily, not only because of the pages its contains but also because it holds the grand photographs of you taken in Washington in the Spring. It certainly is nice having such good companions so close beside me.

Tonight's radio says a young hurricane is boiling some miles off the mouth of the Mississippi, heading Northward in the Gulf toward the Louisiana shore. The same report says it has been pouring in New Orleans all day. Hurricanes aren't especially good news, but if Louisiana must have one, let it keep straight North in its present course, for that will surely blow us some rain and "the children" could stand a bountiful Saturday night bath, lasting until Sunday, if that suits everyone else.

Secretary of Agriculture Branon seems to be in the news again in his controversy with Messrs Dewey and Stasson over current food prices and their causes. I was amused to hear the Secretary pronounce "pecanes" in the Northern fashion on the radio a night or two ago, like "peejeans".

I recall with much pleasure chatting with him during his Melrose visit a year or so ago, and well do I remember at that time he used the Southern pronunciation of "pyh:kahns". I don't recall which is Mr. Branon's home State, but it could be Colorado where they probably don't do much in the pecane line.

I was pleased to learn last week that Aurellia was

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successful in getting her mama on an Old Age Pension and that the first fifty dollar per month check has recently come through. It is said Clemence was equally successful.

I suppose there is no relation to the fifty dollar check Aurellia's mama received and the new forty-five dollar watch Aurellia showed me this morning. If she used the check to buy this time piece, it is expending money differently than I would, but when I stop to think that Aurellia has supported her mama and Bessie and the baby, 10! these many years in the case of mama, and 10! these many months in the case of Bessie and the baby, I must say it is understandable from her point of view that she should feel inclined toward a fling in this direction, especially as the prospect of years ahead suggests that she will forever have to support her three dependents and herself!

Nevertheless, I can't fail to point out that it is the typical impulse of the local colored population to sling all on one big Saturday night go-round regardless of what pressing needs Sunday morning, and thence on to the following Saturday, may bring.

Last night I finished John Kieran's Footnotes to Nature. I found it charming. He recalled to me the doings of some floral enthusiasts, people like one Caroline Dormon, who puzzle Mr. K. and me by going into rapture over some infinitesimal plant while never noticing or possibly disdaining elegant flowers that chance to be more abundant. Among other things he said was to the effect that in the vast confusion in his mind as to what people call flowers and what people call weeds, he comes to the conclusion that a weed is merely a misplaced plant, which seems to be pretty good, I think.

His account of the American cowbird, like the European cuckoo, which lays its individual eggs in another type bird's nest for hatching and rearing of the young. He says by having the single egg hatched in the nest of a smaller bird, the unsuspecting foster mother gets worn out trying to fill up the stomach of her foster child who, by growing faster than the other little birds in the nest, ends up by kicking all the latter out, so that in the final nursing days, the young cowbird gets all the food brought in by the foster parent, which finally is left flat, just as soon as the fledgeling can fly, when instinctively he heads off to join the ranks of the rest of the cowbirds in the neighborhood. "And it isn't done with mirrors", Mr. K. sagely adds.

And now I shall turn again to my nice photographs, blessing you the while for the happiness they bring me....

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Sunday, September 5th, 1948.

Memorandum

Well, the big question is what in the world ever happened to that little old Gulf made hurricane that was heading toward us last Friday night?

Saturday morning's radio spoke of torrential rains in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, but, as ever, the skies over Melrose were cloudless, and have remained so all during the week-end. It's bad enough to be ignored by every neighboring rain cloud, but to be snubbed by even a tornado or hurricane, well, that's the limit.

Saturday morning's dawn was so marvelous, I thought it might be a good time to start making a casualty list of little friends at Arebbourg who had not been able to withstand the summer. The Chinese magnolias are all but definitely dead, I mean but completely. I have been under the impression, from casual side glances, that many of the crepe myrtles had folded up, too, but to my surprise and delight, I discovered that many of those, 2 or 3 feet in height, had actually folded up, so far as the main stem goes, but on closer inspection I find that many of them have put up little shoots from the roots, and so, although it is almost starting at scratch, we are not going to be forced to replant many of them. Paradoxically, as invariably happens, I found some American persimmons, stuck in the ground at random because I didn't need them but couldn't bear throwing them away, are growing lustily, having been completely neglected all summer. I shall use them to replace some of the more hardy one I had nurtured with so much love and care to no appreciable purpose.

But before I had gone further in my survey, it occurred to me that, according to threats of the Weather Man, it really should be pouring, and therefore, since the rain had passed around us, perhaps we were heading into continued dry weather, and so I would do as well to count "our chickens" a little later after torrents have actually started cascading upon us.

So much for the beginning of the Labor Day week end, and I found myself frequently thinking of you and hoping you were going to be able to get a few hours relaxation. Today's radio says skies are fair in your neighborhood, and possibly you are at Greenwood or in the Botanical Gardens where summer, I trust, still lingers on in greenery and flowers.

And speaking of flowers, reminds me of a volume I am reading about botanists, scientists, and so on. It is called Green Laurels, and the author's name, I believe is Petit. I'm learning a heap from it and had no trouble at all, on striking chapter 3, wherein the author does a round about some 18th century botanists of France. What

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made keeping awake easy was the hilarious and perfectly outrageous things the author had to say about Mme. de Pompadour, to whom he referred as that "little parasite" and the person who taught Louis XV "all the vices and follies".

I don't see how it is possible for an author who studied enough about the 18th century to know about its leading and Court favored botanists, shouldn't by the same study realize that the lady in question was undoubtedly the most cultivate personality of her times. The author does state that through the influence of Mme. de Pompadour, the King was persuaded to allow the Encyclopaedia's publication be resumed, but he didn't say if this was part of the "vice" or the "folly" referred to earlier.

As you know, I was always at a loss to comprehend the contemporary female mind that glories in ripping Madam Roosevelt to pieces whereas in reality they should be bailing her as one of the greatest ornaments to their sex. And I am equally puzzled by people of obvious culture and erudition in some fields when they seem to enjoy slinging mud at the finest intellect in 18th century appreciation of Arts and Sciences. I wish I could recall the name of her biographer, an Englishman of the late 1890's or early 1900's, as I recall, who really did a credible work in presenting a fair portrait. It seems to me his name was Smith or Johnson or some such, but I can't remember for the life of me.

Today I heard Columbia "Was There" capture John Wilks Booth, following the death of Mr. Lincoln. Next week they're going to do the Dreyfus Trial. This must be a rebroadcast from earlier programs, although I didn't notice any mention of that fact was made.

A letter from Rudolph in Saturday's post says he will run over to Melrose on Tuesday, the 7th, for a couple of day's stay. A letter in the same post comes from Ruth Cross (Mrs. G. W. Palmer), announcing the death of her husband. They were here a couple of times this Spring. Ruth Cross wrote a life of St. Denis, and possibly will resume writing, now that she is alone. She is living at 134 Pinehurst Avenue, New York City, apartment 35 D. If you are in the Cloisters neighborhood and feel like calling on the lady you might do so. You will find her all wool, but on the dull side.

Somehow I felt an urge to do some rearranging of furniture in my house this week end. I attribute the whole impulse to all the talk on the air about the end of summer, leading me to prepare for winter settings while the thermometer still ranges around in the 90's. I transferred Madame August Metoyer to the library, in the same room with her husband. The grand portraits of Father and Son I moved to my bedroom, hanging them over the mantle, and very elegant they look there, too. The more I contemplate that painting, the more I am convinced it is the most daring picture ever painted in America, or if that is too vast a field, unquestionably the most daring South of the Mason-Dixon Line. I like it better than any portraits I know, and one of these days, I must write a whole page on why most people don't like it and why I love it.....

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Monday, September 6th, 1948.

Memorandum

Labor Day, and may you be doing quite the opposite from what the title of the day suggests.

It was grand having your air mail of Friday in this morning's post, and first off, may I congratulate you on your impending temporary emancipation. I always knew California was good, but only now can I realize how doubly good it really is. Do try to make the most of the interim, as between now and the 20th, I not undertaking too much correspondence, but merely grabbing off a breathing spell whenever opportunity presents itself.

It was noble of you to send the particulars covering the Jefferson-Cosway volume so promptly. I had thought of sending it along to La Blythe a month or two hence, but now that the data is to hand, I think I shall pass it on without delay, on the assumption a second letter coming so soon may impell little Miss Lota to take a pass at the Black Swan without delay.

The weather remains bright and sunny but prejdawns are growing gradually cooler which pleases me much, for I am thus able to take a swing at things at Arenbourg with much greater energy. This morning I was whailing away at weeds quite early, and succeeded in putting a fine blister on my hand before 6:30, so I retired from the field before the cotton pickers had taken to the patch. The dews are so heavy these days that gathering the staple is a soaking task if one starts in before the rising sun has had an opportunity to dry things off a bit.

I read something quite interesting in Green Laurels about the Swedish botanist, Linneus, or rather about an unusual garden he created at his home in a small town outside Christianna, Upsala, I believe was the place. Anyhow, according to my informant, he there contrived a unique collection of plants which formed what might be styled a Time Garden, in that he selected and cultivated plants in one of his gardens, arranging them so they would unfold their blossoms daily in regular succession, one after another, and each so arranged that it would begin unfolding its blossoms one hour after the one just before it. Thus anyone acquainted with the planting, and knowing the time the first plant opened, could readily judge the hour of the day by merely glancing at the plants, and bothering not at all with a sun dial or a time piece. I think this is one of the most remarkable achievements I ever heard of in gardening, and the whole thing altogether charming.

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Another point made in the horticultural study revolved about a certain kind of bamboo. I had to do with its flowering, something I know nothing about, as local bamboo doesn't come into flower, so far as I know. But whatever the kind may be, and this is the extraordinary feature, on whatever day it bursts into bloom, regardless of where all members of the same family may be growing, on that particular day all of them burst forth, whether they be in the jungle of Maylaya or in the conservatories of St. Petersburg. When one considers the variations in climatic conditions, soils, water supply, etc., it seems almost unbelievable that no matter how far afield they may be, the one from the other, they all bring forth their flowers on the same day.

It is good of you to give me the advance particulars regarding Madam Roosevelt's impending broadcasts, and when October rolls 'round, may her time on the air be such that it will be in reach of both of us. If you would also let me know when it gets time for Fred Allen to make his annual bow again, I should be ever so grateful.

In a recent Reader's Digest, I recorded, I noticed in the a quotation from the Fred Allen show when B. Lillie was with him last year, that item about the New Look to which Miss Lillie responded that it wasn't that which interested her, but rather the old gleam, which I heard when originally delivered and liked.

On the home front, J. H., Pat and I had supper together. I had seen a former negro resident of the plantation earlier in the afternoon at the store. He is Nathaniel Brew, my secretary's uncle, and his wife is Ezra's sister. He left the plantation about four years ago, going to Houston where he got an excellent job which developed into a better one, complete charge of all the motor vehicles of the Police Department of Houston, Texas. He has apparently been making an excellent salary. At supper J. H. was saying how strange negroes are and how unpredictable. Nathaniel told him today that he has come to see how the house he is building in Alexandria is progressing. He says he likes Houston, there are many people of color from Cane River there, but that the idea occurred to him the other day that Alexandria would really be the nicer place to live, and so on the impulse, he came over and bought himself a lot and started building a house. What in the world he will do to make a living, he doesn't know. Of course he will be able to get a job alright, but there just can't be anything like his present one. And strangely enough, he scarcely knows Alexandria, never having been there but a few times in his life by car from Melrose, returning the same day. Pat in conclusion said "Well, I declare. I am really disappointed, always having thought Nathaniel an exceptional darkie."

And J. H. responded "You're perfectly right, and he's proving it right now, true to the pattern on a higher scale, the pattern of the unpredictable.".....

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Tuesday, September 7th, 1948.

Memorandum

The thermometer says it's over 100 but a nice little breeze gives the impression it is much less.

I may have remarked before how wonderful is this feature at Arenbourg, the tendency of a little breeze to stir from dawn to dusk. I suppose it may be due to the fact that the surface of the water below the terrace is warmer than the adjacent land, and this fact plus the higher level on the terrace itself tends to keep the air in circulation. It certainly is a pleasant feature in these latitudes.

I laughed to myself this morning when on seeing Celeste at the store I remarked Rudolph was expected this afternoon for a couple of days stay, she instinctively declared, and in all genuineness and hospitality well, we certainly must have a party, even if it be but for just a few friends, a few cocktails, sandwiches and things.

Madam Regard is in the bed from exhaustion and general debility, but even such a circumstance would in no way rule out the possibility of a frolic, let the slightest excuse for one come to hand.

When I saw Dr. Eleanor the other day, she asked me to come to their house for an evening when Rudolph got here. He plans to stay but a couple of days, and as he will want to spend the first evening chatting at home, and the second one in town, it would seem as though poor Celeste will come out the little end of the horn. The same thing happened last year and it was with the greatest difficulty we kept Celeste from knowing that we spent an evening at Cloutiersville the same night we had bidden to a dull party next door. It wouldn't be so trying, if Celeste weren't motivated by the kindest impulses plus the fact she adores parties.

I read a rather interesting biographical sketch of Andre Michaux last night, his residence near Versailles where he inherited a farm from his father, his application in making plants grow for Marie Antoinette at Trianon, his trips to this country, and his headquarters in Jersey, just across from New York where he bought a tract of land where an assistant cultivated specimens Michaux forwarded from the Carolinas and Georgia, which, when convenient were sent on to Versailles for planting at Trianon, and others forwarded from there to Schoenbrunn for the Queen's brother. I hadn't known about the Michaux conservatories on the Jersey shore before although they may have been mentioned in an edition of Michaux's works, brought out by his son, Francois, which some ladies in Charleston, S. C. once called to my attention, as they spoke of the popularity of Michaux in the old days when he spent some time in the Low Country of that region.

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I guess I neglected to say that Rudolph arrived about first dark after an uneventful trip from Denton in his car. We sat long on my front gallery with a pleasant new moon in the distance, filtering its rays through the glistening banana leaves in the foreground.

He didn't have any particular news. I asked about Kenneth. He hadn't heard from directly in over a year, although he chatted with his mother yesterday. She said Kenneth is spending the summer at some beach on Long Island, having taken a cottage there. It is said he is now able to move about on crutches a little bit, which seems remarkable, what with all the smashbang business he has been through.

In today's post we had a post card from Annette Duchene, one time Rouge number who currently has charge of labor relations in some big old textile mill in South Carolina. The card was from Pennland and suggested the Madam join her in leasing a cottage somewhere in the neighborhood for next season. That wouldn't be so bad for Annette but I'm afraid it wouldn't be of much service to the Madam.

In my reading last night, I touched upon Goethe's study of botany in the Monte Carlo neighborhood, the theories he propounded as a result of his observations in that region, etc., etc. I had forgotten, if, indeed, I ever knew, that Goethe had ever taken a flyer into the field of botany, and I was entranced at this account of it and the influence it had on the Court at Weimer.

But the night is growing late, for me, for and I must lay out some Rocquefort cheese and crackers and a spot of wine for my guest and me before we fold up, and so, if you will pardon me, I shall break off at about this point.

I do want to say that at supper, J. H. asked me to pass by the store tomorrow morning to look at the design for the new Melrose Pecan packages which has just arrived. Before he O. K.'s the thing, he wants my opinion. As I understand it, the package is designed to hold ten pounds of pecanes, a size which I feel is much too large. What with pecanes this year likely to sell at 50 or 60 cents a pound, it seems to me that comparatively few city dwellers would be likely to buy in ten pound quantities, which certainly would be a little bulky, and I doubt if many people in town buy five or six dollar's worth of pecanes at a throw.

But I must really fold at this point. One bad thing about occupying one's house alone is the fact that one gets selfish and tends to mourn the loss of freedom to run up and down this keyboard, for example, whenever the impulse strikes, and it strikes me daily....

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Dora 9/5

Wednesday, September 8th, 1948.

Memorandum

Another sweltering day, with both thermometer and humidity at 99.

It is pleasant to have Rudolph here. He is one of those ideal guests who always seem able to find things to entertain him when his host is busy at one thing or another, and that virtue is certainly rare and greatly to be prized.

Just at sun down, we sat for a while on the gallery where the butterfly lilies are in bloom. It is really delightful, not only the beauty and fragrance of the great white clusters, but also the surprising numbers of humming birds who seem to like that hour best for extracting the nectar from the lovely white flowers. At the moment I do not have any ornithologists about, but one of these when I wing one I am going to make a count of the different species circling about the stalks at the same time or in quick succession, one after another. The most I ever counted in different types of plumage was seven, and that was just as night was settling down. One can sit practically again one of the great three or four foot stalks and the little birds are so to they don't seem to mind the presence of a human being at all. Would you eventually like to do a Lady Audubon, just to see what you could make Bittito strong a breeze ruffled feathered and flowered neighbors this evening, and much cannonading in the Westheld the promise of a gigantic rain that fulfilled itself by a mere drizzle.

We ran up to town to call on the Worsleys. They have a delightful tiny apartment, but have the promise of an old house in November, which struck me as wonderful that they had gone to so much pains to put their temporary abode in such shipshape condition, painting, varnishing, etc., but I think enthusiasm and energy are two things Don doesn't lack.

Rudolph did some nice things on the melodian and I would gladly have remained longer, we arrived about 8:30 and left a little before 10, but I realized that tomorrow is another day for the host and hostess and it seemed to me but fair to give them a chance at folding up.

They served a drink I liked very much, crushed ice, gin, grapefruit juice as the major ingredient, and liberal doses of table salt. I couldn't taste the gin at all, for which I was glad since I don't care for it much, but the salted grapefruit juice, so thoroughly iced, an especially in such warm, damp weather, was really delicious and refreshing.

3159

Although it drizzled in town, and was as dark as Egypt, I nevertheless found myself astonished at the amount of building that has gone on there during the past number of years since my last trip in that direction. As I glimpsed new facades shimmering under somewhat garish new Neon signs, I felt the first clear realization of the length of years since I had been off the plantation, save for little journeys last year to Cloutierville. And the worst part of the whole sensation was that I didn't regret having failed to see new buildings rising to extend the Natchitoches urban zones, and when back home again tonight, I seem to feel ever so contented to find myself way out here "behind the bushes".

Rudolph wrote a letter on this machine today, and he tells me that it is apparently one designed for French and Spanish composition, since it has all the accents and whatnot that appear in the Latin mechanics of forming letters. I usually stick pretty close to the regular keyboard without making any attempt to hit at the keys where fractions and such like appear on machines for English and American composition, and so the substitution of such mathematical signs and wonders by accents and the like bother me not at all. I mention this type of machine, however, in order that you may better understand the circumstances on occasion when inadvertently I get off the beaten track.

You will be interested in the enclosure, for apparently Dora is referring to the same articles appearing in the Tribune of whose existence you so thoughtfully acquainted me some time back.

His mention of Harding Carter reminds me that Sally Farrell, his sister in law, was here last month and promised to bring Mr. Carter around one of these days. I shall be enchanted to compare notes with him on a flock of points, and particularly relating to the subject which seems to have upset so many apple carts through the columns of the Tribune.

You will pardon me if I break off a little earlier than usual. My hejira to the city, plus the presence of my guest who shares my boudoir office with me, somehow combines to distract me at this late hour, and I shall accordingly fold herewith, looking forward to Friday when I shall probably be alone again.....

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Ida Hazette 9/7

September 9th, Thursday, 1948.

Memorandum

The plantation was pretty quiet today, what with last night's little sprinkle being sufficient to dampen the cotton, and so keep the pickers out of the fields.

Rudolph and I spent much of our free time at Arenbourg where he helped me measuring off points where the oriental persimmons will be set out late next month. His understanding of the general lines I have in mind makes it easy to work with him at such business, and it was fun being in the open and in such pleasant company where work, under such circumstances, seems no work at all, and planting will be so greatly facilitated when the time arrives, what with all the main outlines determined.

Dr. Knipmayer came earlier today and left before 11. Contrary to his custom of dining at Magnolia, he returned to town to address a group of business men, with a view to getting about fifteen thousand dollars from the town and the gift of a site for a new medical center. The State and Federal Governments will match the money advanced by the town. Personally, I'm all in favor of more extensive health centers, and in this area they are particularly needed where physicians with private practices are so scarce and for the most part so scant on their services and so out of sight in their fees.

Dr. Eleanor told me last night that Dr. Yaeger of Cloutierville is complaining because many residents of Cloutierville and environs are going to Natchitoches to employ the services of the lady doctor. She says she has asked several of them why they don't save themselves the added expense of a trip to town by letting Dr. Yaeger take care of them. Their reasons are two fold; they are used to the lady doctor and like her, and Dr. Yaeger's charges are so exorbitant that they can employ someone to take them to town, pay her charges and still come through without having to pay more than if they had gone to Dr. Yaeger. Dr. Eleanor says that at first she had some qualms about so many of her former neighbors following her to town, but she has to admit a person has the right to choose whichever physician he prefers, and besides, she adds, I still love my patients, especially the colored ones, from the old days, that is to say from last year.

3161

J. H. went to New Orleans this afternoon and will be back tomorrow morning, ostensibly on pecane business. His custom is to drive the 45 or 50 miles to Alexandria at noon, hopping a plane there that gets him into the Crescent City within an hour or two, and so have the evening and night there. Plane service back to Alexandria is frequent, and thus he is able to range about the State in a minimum of time.

Before leaving, he asked me my honest opinion of the design tentatively ~~was~~ selected for the pecane box. I told him frankly I thought the sketch had stressed the pecane tree and the negro gathering the pecanes, with Melrose so far in the background it made little or no impression. I recommended that the house be brought into the foreground to dominate the whole design. My point is that he doesn't want to sell any old pecanes for the Pecane Growers Association but rather Melrose Pecanes. We shall see eventually how the thing pans out.

Rudolph mentioned a recently produced or forth coming movie of the lives of Robert and Clara Schuman. He says he understands it is an excellent film and of course has much Schuman music running through the piece. Since I never get to the movies, I reckon I'll not get to see it, but I like to keep abreast of such creations and in case I should unexpectedly find myself in town with time on my hands, I should certainly like to sample such a presentation.

Two letters from Baton Rouge in today's post. The General reports removal from his former country residence to town and the enclosure from the Mazurettes speaks for itself. I must respond to the enclosure by tomorrow's post. I make it a point to contact the Mazurette tenants when they bring their cotton to be ginned, asking them on amounts so far gathered, anticipated bulk in the fields yet to be gathered which I like to pass along to Charles, for I presume he has but meager correspondence with the people living on the place. One nice feature about passing along news of the crops this year is that in the Little River area the cotton crop is exceeding expectations and previous production by a third to a half, and surely that must be pleasant news to owners of property, and particularly when they are absent.

I expect to arise with Rudolph before tomorrow's dawn, for he wants to head for home before the heat gets turned on. I shall ride to Arenbourg instead of walking, and that will seem odd indeed.

We spent the early part of this evening turning through the elegant Marly folio, and Rudolph was entranced by its beauty and the details of the place of whose existence he had not chance to know about before. I'm wondering how he ever escaped all my talk about the place all these years. Lucky him, poor you.....

Bachelier 9/15

3162

Friday, September 10th, 1948.

Memorandum

Alors, je suis blesseur de la guerre, or, to make it a little more specific, I got tangled up with some bees this morning. I don't know how they are feeling tonight, but I appear to be buldging in spots and my head is a little more woozy than usual.

Rudolph was up and ready to take off a little after five. It was a gray morning, following a night of intermittant drizzle. I accordingly got to attacking weeds before full daylight, and I gather I must have stirred up a nest of bees in the weeds or a sub;surface nest which some types love to build in hot weather.

All I know about it is that the first thing I knew there was a needle like penetration of something or other at my elbows, my temples and on the back of my neck, whereupon I decided that it was my move, I and I did, to another situation, beating both elbows, temples and neck all at the same time, which is really quite a rare accomplishment, and undoubtedly enabled me to present a remarkably hilarious picture to anyone at that strange hour who may have chanced to see me hot;footing it across the terrace.

I suppose 8 or 10 got me in the neck, or rather at the base of my skull, and only about four or five on my elbows. My right arm is a little swollen and somewhat stiff and I naturally fall into the sore head section. But I shall sleep mightily tonight, and by another dawn I shall feel ready to be up and at 'em, I the weeds, not the bees.

Because of the excessive humidity in the air, the Madam burned butaine heaters all day, with all doors and windows open. For the last four months, during the day, her doors and windows have all been kept closed to keep the heat out and fans going to keep the air in circulation inside. The abrupt reversal of procedure seems odd but not a bad idea.

What with the humidity being absorbed plentifully by the cotton in the field plantation operations functioned at reduced speed, with a concentration of energy on the new pecane "fort" and the new garage. Some of the boys took the opportunity to go to town to register for the draft, I Peter, little Elam, etc., who must be in the 20 or 23 age group, according to the registration schedule, although one would be wrong in assuming that local negroes would indicate their ages by going within the time limits laid down for precise age limits. An 18 year old is as likely to saunter before the Board with the 25 year olds, and the 25 year olds await the registration of the 18 year old, who, I believe form the last bracke

3163

In the two books on Nature I have been reading, I have been struck by a revolutionary concept expressed therein as regards preconceived notions, ; on my part at least, ; about beavers and ants.

John Kieran declares that the old notion that beavers were wonderful engineers, always felling trees to land just where desired isn't so at all. He says according to people living on intimate terms with beavers declare that the latter are forever cutting down trees that incline to fall any old which way, ; and not infrequently on the beaver engaged in feeling the tree. He also says that the fame of the beaver for great industry doesn't seem to be carried out by the facts and that they are indeed a slothful lot. I cannot help wondering if Mr. J. Kieran is correct in all this, and I still continue to wonder at the remarkable dams I have seen that they have built.

And a couple of other writers on Nature which I have lately read, possibly Sanderson or Petit, say that while it is true the ants are wonderfully organized, there is wide spread reason to suspect that in spite of this organization of perfection, the organization appears to be the big thing and not the individual ant, so that for those in control, like those in the Kremlin, may find themselves in advantageous situations, directing other people's live but completely, the actual lot of the individual ant is a humdrum, slavish existence, and by submitting to it, the ants demonstrate clearly enough that they are stupid to stand for such regimentation.

This observation on the ants recalled to mind the Hall essay wherein he mentions having stretched himself on the grass and watched the busy bees constantly at their labors while the thought coursed through his mind that surely one trouble with the bee was the fact that the little insect never took a page from Mr. Hall, flattening himself out and observing for a while what Mr. Hall, ; and the rest of the world, ; was up to.

Another manifestation of Nature is reported by Aurellia. Her colt was nibbling grass in the yard by her gallery when apparently a snake bit him. "He jumped slap up as high as your head and started making white at his mouth like okra when you cut it". His lips and neck began swelling but Bessie and Aurellia put some coal oil on his face and neck, so after he had flattened out like dead, he began to get better, and now he is alright again.

And now I must take an anodyne and flatten out a bit myself with a view of stirring up something better tomorrow at dawning....

3164

Sunday, September 12th, 1948.

Memorandum

From the enclosure, you will note that little Miss Anne Parrish seems to have had quite a bumper crop in "misere" thus far in 1948.

I must drop her a line from the same desk Josiah used in writing The Guinea Hen thanking her for her letter and, ; in anticipation, ; for the copy of Harriet she threatens to head out in this direction.

Saturday's post also brought a flock of other mail, but I shall not take pen in hand to answer it for another day or so.

I had quite a few calls over the week end, which always offers an excellent excuse to neglecting the typewriter. My friend, Dee Dee came by to say how nicely his cotton harvest is coming along, and a youth from the same Little River neighborhood came by to show me a fine new gold tooth his girl friend had recently given him as a birthday present. He wanted to know if he could leave some cash with me with a view of saving it for him until the end of "cotton time", when he wants to purchase a fine wrist watch for his girl friend. He said the gold tooth, according to his dentist, cost eleven dollars, but that he was going to pay thirty three dollars for the wrist watch. I never have been able to guess costs and how moneys will be invested in these parts. I guess this is the first time I ever heard of a lady present her boy friend with a gold tooth, and I'm quite sure I never dreamed such striking ornaments of beauty could be secured at such a reasonable price. I looked at the object as it flashed among his beautiful molars, and so far as I could make out, it looked flashy enough to satisfy the most fastidious of gold teeth admirers, and it certainly enchanted the possessor which is all that really counts.

With the heat and humidity down to the mid 80's, it seemed a good time to inaugurate the autumn approach by getting the Madam out on the gallery today, ; the first time since May, I think. The little walk of a dozen paces did her no harm, and got her mind off a news item about some social event in New Orleans she had read to me seven times in a row while the sun was yet unobscured and my excuse for moving about was out of the question. I suppose constant retelling of the same story goes along with advanced age, but the surprising number of times we reread the same article from the newspaper within the space of half an hour was something more intense along the line of repetition than I had run across before. Apparently the little outing gave the lady some diversion, what with plants to note and birds to point out, ; and at supper time, she really quite outdid herself in the fired chicken and the vegetable section, so I feel our first venture out of doors was a success, and I trust, a good omen for impending weeks.

3165

he Library sent me a flock of book I had read a couple of times before, and scarcely need to read the first time. But there was a different item, entitled "Minor Heresies", or some such by someone whose name may be Eaddies, or similar, if you can think of anything like that.

Anyhoo, the thing seems to be the Memoir of a youth whose father and mother were Presbyterian missio airies in the Shanghai region of China and as the youth was born in 1918, it all seems fairly contemporary. There is a certain hilarity about the whole thing that puts me in mind of that war memoire a Frenchman kept in Paris during the first world war, strange that both the name of the book and its author have eluded me. The present volume suggests the former by treating what is usually handled heavily is here treated with gaiety with practically no heroes but, and remarkably enough, quite a lot of human beings, which somehow are forever getting pushed out of sight both in martial and missionary manuscripts.

I rattled through a few disks of George Eliot's Romola, a Florentine tale of the 1490's, much Savanorola and so on. Little Miss Eliot appears distinctly erudite through these pages, with sentences of Italian thrown in for good measure without the slightest provocation. The latter feature always wears me down, what with this citizen or that of old Florence bubbling along in the most perfect English, only to finish off his diatribe with an explosion of his native tongue, obviouslyly the only language he has been speaking all the time. I think your friend, Mr. Kane, feels, even as Miss Eliot, that every once in a while he just must throw in a phrase or a sentence of some foreign language.

The cases aren't parallel, but the one reminds me of another somewhat surprising question asked by a somewhat flustered French diplomat, addressing the President of the United States. It was the diplomat's understanding that Mr. Roosevelt spoke French as well as English, and thinking the conversation might be more satisfactory if they spoke in French, if the President didn't mind, since the English of the diplomat was a little sketchy, he started off his conversation by asking the President "Do you speak English."

Of course he gasped immediately on realizing what stupidity he had committed, but Mr. Roosevelt, as you might guess, immediately set him at ease by roaring good naturedly, and off the pair went into solid French from that point forward.

I'm having no luck at all in getting up any sympathy about my bee stings. My right arm is still swollen at the elbow, where no one notices it, but the back of my head and my right temple, which had fine goose eggs yesterday, now seem to be quite normal and unremarkable. And so I guess it was lucky that I got most of the barrage on the hardest part of my anatomy, and I have no doubt that the softer elbow section will be back to normal proportions by the morrow.....

3166

Monday, September 13th, 1948.

Memorandum

How nice to have your kind letter in today's post.

And how nice of you to think of me when browsing in the 4th Avenue neighborhood. I have no doubt the Jefferson volume will be along shortly, and I know it is going to afford a heap of people much pleasure, and it may serve us with grace, too, in influencing forces in the regions where floats the Black Swan.

It is good of you to assist me, too, in getting accustomed to this machine. I believe I have found the hyphen, which, if I am correct is situated on the top bank, the last key to the right. This is where it was on my Underwood, but with this difference, in this Latin Royal outfit, the hyphen is obtained, if indeed it is by operating the capitol shift to secure it. If I really haven't located the thing precisely, I shall be enchanted if you will advise me accordingly so I may try again.

The Max und Moritz thing floors me. I am frankly sorry for both you and the child. Let us hope some unforeseen arrangement may speedily develope so a more satisfactory arrangement for you both may ensue forthwith. I think it imperative that you have a maximum of complete rest and relaxation at the close of each busy day, and I think it would be much better for the child if she were to finally be housed with someone who is at home during the day. I am not going to make inquiries regarding this matter, for it will be enough for you to weather the business without having constant reminders regarding it, but I shall breathe easier when I learn a satisfactory solution has been reached.

All day we have had an intermittent pinpoint mist that hasn't even eliminated the dust in the road, although the dampness was sufficient to knock the cotton pickers out of the fields before they began. It rained almost 4 inches in New Orleans and Baton Rouge last night and buckets came down in Alexandria but the rain ceased about 25 miles down the road. But the weather was cooler and I labored with much vim and vigor at Arenbourg, digging Johnson grass whose roots immediately decompose when any dampness in the open air strikes them, and today's set up was perfect for just such doings.

The swift shift from torrid summer to something else made itself manifest in the Madam's department where, on the plea of eradicating dampness, she left her butaine stoves going all day, and in consequence the place was as hot as a biscuit. It seems odd, this right about face, since it was only a couple of days ago, as from the first of May, a whole battery of electric fans have been going full tilt in her living room and bed room.

3167

There were several items in this morning's post, including a bread and butter note from Rudolph which I inadvertently destroyed. He reports a pleasant trip home, broken by a stop off at Marshall, Texas, to call on a blind musician and his wife, where he left the bouquet of butterfly lilies he had taken with him on leaving Melrose. I shall try to get the address of those people, for they might like to have some roots to plant.

There was a letter from Dora, but what with a shortage of time, my secretary didn't get to it, and so we shall see on the morrow what is cooking in Oklahoma.

Celeste was at the store when the mail came and showed me an "At Home" invitation coming from the Wenks, scheduled for the 24th, from 7 to 10 p.m. I take it the social season must be getting under way in Shreveport. A very gushy note was scrawled on the printed, or engraved invitation, saying that "Champagne punch, the Kiss of the Gods would be featured in the refreshments. That sounds just about as foolish as Sister in her giddier moments. Celeste asked Eugene and Teddy, the two clerks who chanced to be present, if they wouldn't like to go. They declined abruptly, saying she could have the "Kiss of the Gods" for they preferred plain beer if it had to be drunk in peace.

In the local Draft registration, several of my friends have been to town, taking half a day off from work to comply with the Law, only to be turned back, being told the Board was too busy to register them when they called, and that they must come back the following week, which seems to indicate something out of whack in the local setup.

I know one or two 22 year old mulattoes who say they aren't going to bother to register, and that if the Army needs them, they or it must come and get them. I have no doubt it will, since Uncle Sam reportedly has a long, long arm. The stupid part about this disregard of the youths in question is the fact that being on the farm they could well expect exemption, once they were properly registered, whereas, and the alternative is obvious.

According to local news mongers, the week end in these parts saw much drunkenness, not much fighting, and at least one reconciliation. The wife of the Dark Duke left him last week, coming down from the Tobin plantation to stay with her sister, Dowreatha, where she remained for a week, helping her sister pick the crop belonging to her and Ezra. But even though a little under the weather yesterday, Log took his wife back home, and so that is patched up momentarily, as is the domestic infelicity formerly existing in Ezra's menage.

"But dollars are round and made to roll" is probably the primary motivating sentiment up and down the road, and unless the dampness cuts down the money supply by keeping people out of the fields, the same abandoned pattern will undoubtedly be followed for the next few weeks. And so the worlds turns, and with the humidity things at Arenbourg are reviving mightily, and I, personally, feel as gay as a cricket in body, and so in spirit, if only the Max und Mor it thing can be speedily settled.....

Essie Mae 9/13
Mrs Nellie 9/15
3168

Tuesday, September 14th, 1948.

Memorandum

Thanks for your elegant letter which, naturally, I read in place of the unopened one from Dora which arrived in yesterday's post.

How characteristically nice of Lydia to have volunteered in the matter you mention. Somehow, I and I must have been dumb, I'm afraid I omitted to preface my remarks to her at the time I first mentioned the matter, that on that particular day I had successfully negotiated a sale of some old books of which I had no need, realizing on the transaction the precise amount of money required for the item under consideration for installation at Arenbourg. I immediately set the same aside in an envelope all by itself, so that when February or March rolled 'round, we would be able to acquire the outfit and have it properly installed, with a hook up to electric current, and so not give thought to defraying expenses. I must have intended at the beginning of my letter to make that point clear at the end of the discussion of the need for the thing, and then, on weighing the matter of the wisdom of investment while "thinking out loud", I suppose I must have taken it for granted that I had already mentioned the required balance, thus omitting any mention of it at all.

And so I must hasten to write Lydia that the financial side of the thing is already disposed of, so that the funds mentioned by her may remain fluid so she may feel quite free to employ them in taking care of any demands on herself, being fully assured that this particular improvement at Arenbourg is already assured. Please forgive me on her behalf for my woolgathering in having skipped all mention of this important consideration. At the same time, will you, on contacting her, call her blessed for me, for in spite of my own clumsiness her generosity remained as firm and full hearted as ever. And let's all three of us rejoice together that the proposed installation is so completely guaranteed.

While I think of it, I shall answer your inquiry regarding my error in mispronouncing the former cook's name. I think I stressed the point that local darkies go to great lengths to keep their hair as straight as possible. The cook in question was Pearly Mae, whom I, inadvertently, glancing at her perruque, addressed as, of all things, Curly Mae, which was just about like clouting her over the head with a brickbat.

Looking back on such disasters and adventures as you experienced on the Saw Mill River Highway tend to have an element of humor in them, although they are tragic enough when they are transpiring. Mary Lambdin and I had one such with Magruder Drake of Church Hill which always sends us into gales of laughter whenever we recall it. Mr. Drake is the essence of courtesy, and during the afternoon drive when he took us to Rodney, Miss., he was painfully considerate even going to far as forever swishing a little feather duster over our part of the car cushions whenever we had stopped to call on any one. Before we got back to Edgewood, night overtook us, as disaster after disaster descended upon Mr. Drake. There was a flat tire, then a broken jack, then a trip on foot for miles to get help and so on. Finally in wrestling with a wrench, he tore his

beautiful new suit, and cut his forehead, and finally in some other contortion in struggling with the tire, he smashed his wrist watch, but unfailingly the gentleman, to the extreme point of apologizing to us for having smashed his new time piece, thus making it impossible for him to keep us informed of the hour. We did a little tittering behind our fans at the time, but it was only afterward that we could really let go with a large roar.

I'm so glad the Max und Moritz thing got straightened out before it ever got complicated. And it is nice to know that complete aloneness will be yours after your journey to the school in the case of your other problem visitor. I shall be so glad to learn if you enjoyed tonight's theatre, which, I suppose, is vaguely historical, being suggested by Annie Oakley, isn't it.

I talked with Mrs. Rand this morning. She says the doctor was rushed from Melrose to the Alexandria hospital on Sunday afternoon. Some diagnosis at the hospital was relayed here, urging him to return home immediately. He may be in the hospital for a time. Diabetes is the big consideration, as I understand it.

You will be interested in the enclosure regarding the Friends of Joe Gilmore. I can't imagine what it will turn out to be. When Lyle read me the four chapters he had written in 1944, they weren't very coherent. I am hoping these may be changed considerably or suppressed entirely. As I recall there was one in which Aunt Cammie and Robina figured, something about some flower pots. One was about Sam Peace and Mattie, our present servants, when Sam killed Mattie's lover, for Sam was married to Mattie at the time of the murder. A third was about little Miss Alberta wanting to paint a church down at the Shades, and the fourth had something to do about a party Lyle and I attended in Natchez, even though Lyle hadn't been in Natchez since 1929, and in that year I didn't even know there was such a place in the world.

In his text, Lyle casually named everyone by their right names, but I imagine Eddy may not quite dare to do so, although he may. I am certainly hoping he does not include the chapter woven about my adventures in the forgotten mansions but Eddy is quite unpredictable, and so I shall take to the cyclone cellar until after the first flurry of publication passes and I discover how most of us fared.

Wednesday, September 15th, 1948.

MemorandumN

May I tell you that "My Heart and My Head" came in the morning post, which, now that I have said as much, it strikes me that it may sound like something Marie Antoinette might have penned in all truth the day after.....

But isn't it a lovely item, and I'm sure the notations under the illustrations are going to interest me as much as the illustrations themselves, all of which I have gone over with the greatest eagerness. I am going to write my name in the volume, just to keep it properly anchored, and in the future, should another volume of any description pass from you to me, I should treasure it exceedingly if you would be so friendly as to make it doubly precious to me by thus including an extra bit of you in the first pages.

Dr. Alben, the State pecane expert, dined with me today, every one else being somewhere or other at noon. I asked him about the breeze that the Worsleys reported as blowing in the Shreveport area last Thursday along about first dark. He said it had wrought great damage on some orchards, and that one place alone lost more than one hundred thousand pounds by just one gust of wind. At present prices, that would represent about twenty thousand dollars, which seems to be quite a puff.

I have a mother_in_law story. Celeste is spending a few days in Shreveport shopping. Her sister, Celine, is at Melrose staying with Madam Regard during Celeste's absence. Yesterday afternoon, Celine received a telegram from her home at Mansura, La., signed by her son_in_law, asking her to drop everything and come home immediately as her daughter had just been taken to New Orleans for an emergency operation and the men wanted his mother_in_law at home. Celine couldn't figure out what good she could do for her daughter, the doctor in New Orleans, and accordingly she made a telephone call and discovered her daughter was perfectly alright and at home, but that her son_in_law missed her and wanted her back with them. It sounds like a dangerous or at least a dumb business, but even so it's good to hear such different tunes on the mother_in_law theme for once at least.

It strikes me that I must have been mistaken about my smartness in discovering the binderstrick key, as reported last night. But I have done some more exploring and now I think I am getting on the right track.

0516

3171

The domestic scene was tinctured with a panicky element today, which could easily have been foreseen when Aurellia arrived, saying her mother had been sick all night with indigestion. If one is awakened three times at night by the barking of a dog, says a lawyer in *The Brothers Karamazov*, he is likely to declare on the following day that he hasn't slept all night for the barking of the dogs. Well, so be it, and Aurellia hadn't slept. First off, today being Wednesday, the laundry had to be sent to town. My bed was accordingly denuded, and after that, Aurellia remembered that some 34 pairs of sheets of the past couple of weeks hadn't been returned from the laundry and that there were no fresh sheets in the house. That was easily taken care of by a quick trip to the store. Then followed a Saw Mill River series that scarcely merit individual detail. Finally she served the Madam's supper. Time is comparative to the Madam and she noticed nothing strange about the hour. ut although I kept her chatting on her sofa for over an hour following her meal and at long last, it was time for her to jump into bed, I glanced at the clock and was mildly surprised to see that it was precisely 3N40. As a servant, Aurellia is really excellent in most respects, but when she really makes up her mind to go hay wire, she accomplishes it in a great big way.

At Arenbourg things are looking alright, thanks to the recent heavy mists. The weather was marvelous today for those who would put their foot in the big road, being all blue and gold, but of course I continue to cry for rain.

The new seasonal catalogues from the various nurseries are being to come to hand. I'm thinking of ordering some white cannas and some old fashioned poppies, that big blossomed affair that comes up year after year along in mid summer. I notice another place of good repute is offering white and watermelon red crepe myrtles and I think we should have a few more. The latter, along with the oriental persimmons ought to be planted in November, so ordering now will not be too early. We shall go in for another round of magnolias in the Spring, and possibly some wax leaf *lugustrum*. I am also beginning to think about filling in the missing spaces in the nandina and Switch Cane sections, but that may be done from local supplies.

I may forego the poppies for this year and some chrysums I had thought of planting, going on the assumption that it might be better to concentrate on the things requiring more time for growth, and now trying to bring the whole business into flower at the same time, for the smaller things can be brought forth readily and with dispatch, and while it is a joy to get them growing, it is perhaps better to devote my present energies exclusively to the bigger backgrounds.. I seem off again on thinking out loud and it certainly must make mighty dull reading. who can tell, I might do better on the morrow, but I shall not be the happier, for "My Head and My Heart" made everything perfect today.....

0516

3172

Thursday, September 16th, 1948.

Memorandum

The hot weather must have been getting into the hair of the publishers of *Life*. Today's issue arrive carrying two extra articles of four pages each, the sets following each other in duplicate. I think this flaw in publishing doesn't happen often, in fact I don't ever remember seeing more than one duplication before, and that but once.

Today, like yesterday, has been wonderful and last night, what with a big old moon, was doubly so. After folding up my beard around 10N30, I discovered I was too wide awake to sleep and accordingly sat on my gallery for a couple of hours. The moon on the dew drenched banana leaves edged them all in silver, and on the brick pavement a fantastic pattern of arabesques constantly shifted its lights and shades as my big yellow cat and the four kittens froliced back and forth and up and down the banana stalks. Good old Dora snoozed unperturbed at my feet, unmindful of the lovely serenade my good friend and neighbor, the mocking bird, who dwells in the crepe myrtle tree hard by the iris garden. It strikes me I may have omitted a verb from the foregoing sentence, but that is simply in harmony with the subject, for as I sat there it was pleasant to marvel at the gentle peace of the world in general and the gaiety of beathered and furred friends, without bestirring the mind to think anything through but quite content to absorb the sensations of my immediate surroundings, blending so smoothly with the thoughts of loved ones drifting through my dreams.

And today, being Thursday, it ought to have been Knipmayer Day, but it wasn't, for he had to take a couple of his sons, their wives and children, to Baton Rouge, where the papas are beginning the Fall semestre at L. S. U. I am too old fashioned to ever accommodate myself to the new Age wherein Grandpa takes his offspring and their offspring to college. It simply wasn't done that way when I used to go to school.

J. H. and I had supper together alone tonight. He is "holding the thought" for dry weather, figuring if thus favored, the cotton crop will be gathered by October 1st. My guess is that it will be later than that, although it is more difficult for anyone to estimate this year, what with one hundred additional pickers being brought in from Natchitoches this year for the first time.

SV16

3173

If the crop is gathered within two weeks, the economic pattern is going to be a little different than usual, for I recall that cotton usually fuses with pecan harvesting, early in November, and after the gin has run through much of January. With an abrupt termination of income from cotton picking by October 1st, and pecan still on the trees until November, there is likely to be a pinch in the gap between, for I have no doubt that most of the cotton money is being spent either on transitory gaieties or clothes, so that the oldsters are likely to be a little more miserly in their expenditures. I am sure every extra bale will have additional lifting power this particular season. J.H. said Charles gets 25 per cent of each bale, and how the 75 per cent is divided between the negroes who raise the cotton and J.H. who supervises and gins may be divided I have no notion. But I think it lucky for Charles to get the 25 per cent in view of the fact that he hasn't set foot on his Little River Farm in years.

At the gin today, I confided to Ezra, that a book was coming out shortly detailing the murder of Mattie's lover by Sam Peace, who was Mattie's husband at the time. Ezra told me it was his old car to which the stiffened corpse was lashed, and that he would certainly enjoy seeing how the story reads in print. I suppose this chapter may be included in "The Friends of Joe Gilmore", and I guess it is just as well that neither Sam nor Mattie read.

Peter passed by this morning in search of a cup of coffee. He tells me that disaster threatens the Melrose Social Club alongside Arenbourg. Last night, there was a frolic there, and Madame Alphonse, who is pretty crazy, but not quite enough, denounced the patrons and her son, who is really the soul of the place. Although the youth is but 22 and terribly dumb about everything save making money, he has really done very well. But Madame Alphonse doesn't want her bootlegging son to wave his eyes at any of the darker young ladies, and so put the Club into an uproar. The patrons all left and the son got in his car, and never did come back last night. If he pulls out, the Club will fold up automatically, which will be a pity, for it does serve a definite need for entertainment in these parts. If only someone would tap Mme. Alphonse' over the head with a hammer, everything would be "jus' as lovin'".

And so to bed, on to Miss Eliot's Romola, or the front gallery, where my four cats are sitting in a row, looking as though they expected tonight to repeat last night. I'll jump under a shower first, and then if my old friend, the mocking bird is doing business, we shall see.....

3174

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3718

RD 9/11 3175

Dona 9/11

Postell 9/18

Friday, September 17th, 1948.

Memorandum

Summer boils on, with thermometer readings still in the 90's, the Weather Man evidently unmindful that we have passed the middle of September.

Like everybody else on earth tonight, I am shocked by the murder of Count Bernadotte. It's wonderful how a few people of a particular race or nation, like the Jews and the Russians, can divert themselves so speedily of the oceans of good will that years of struggle brought forth. It seems ridiculous to say so and yet I am almost convinced that any first rate psychiatrist, after examining the leaders of the Stearn gang and the Kremlin outfit would probably pronounce both sets as decidedly off. Somehow in ordinary walks of life, I have become accustomed to brushing against people in various grades of insanity, but I haven't yet accustomed myself to understanding that, as in Hitler's Germany and Staline's Russia, vast nations can fall into the hands of groups of people with kinks in their brains.

The California enclosure disappoints me. I wouldn't attempt to say what element I find lacking, but somehow I had expected something different, and better. If I read the letter correctly, we needn't look for too many tail feathers from the Black Swan to be plucked by the Santa Anna Hand.

Locally, the Melrose Social Club appears doomed. The success of the organization depended upon the personality of Alphonse Metoyer, Jr., and he has temporarily left Melrose in his car, being absent some 48 hours with no one knowing of his whereabouts. The trouble arose over his mulatto mother's mania that her son should not consort with anyone save mulattoes. In fact, she didn't want her 22 year old son to go out with any girls at all. The lady's mania developed into an urge to say unpleasant things to all ladies of color who partonized the Club, and seeing his business dissolving before his very eyes, the son in dejection, withdrew from the paternal roof.

I regretted this turn of affairs at the home of our next door neighbor to the South of Arenbourg, and so I turned to our next door neighbor to the North, the Llorenzes. Bill Llorenz who formerly operated the Melrose saloon at the far end of the bridge, opened a grocery store in Alexandria when Natchitoches Parish went dry. On investigation, I learned he isn't making much money. I therefore immediately set wheels in motion to persuade him to come to Melrose to visit it father, Alfred, on Sunday. I shall recommend to him that a new Melrose Social Club

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be organized on his father's property, which has but Arenbourg between it and Alphonse's Club. What with Alphonse's determination to close his place "on a mad" at his son, this ought to afford a wonderful opportunity for Bill to re-establish himself on Cane River in a line of business for which he has a remarkably fine personality. And the pay off will come in the satisfaction of knowing that our negroes will have their own "Poor Man's Club" conveniently near, thus saving them much sole leather in chasing up and down the road, and providing much contentment for them in their own country neighborhood.

All this must make very fascinating reading, and I apologize. But I plead an extenuating excuse in thus providing you with a contemporary picture of little problems of the plantation, and how circumstances develop, so that, if you care to, you may always be informed as to how the pattern arrived at the state it reached when occupancy of Arenbourg becomes a reality.

On the home front, I think I detect a very slight but very definite sagging of the mental operations of my patient. Certain aspects suggest that sly tricks are being played on us, although it is difficult to say if this is a fact. During the day, the lady can scarcely get out of her chair without assistance. But at night she usually goes from her bedroom to the back gallery and into the bathroom, and back, at least four times, for at least four changes of nightgowns are found each morning at various stages along the route.

I assume the fresh nightgowns are put on correctly, since Aurellia tells me the fifth one is always properly arranged each morning. It does seem odd, therefore, that so often on retiring at night, her gown is put on backward or, as happens once in a great while, merely the sleeves are put on, with the gown itself hanging down her back. Up until recently I have felt the greatest pity that this person, always of extreme personal modesty, should find herself in such confusion. Putting five and five together, I am beginning to wonder.

It would seem obvious to me, and to anyone, that this sort of thing can't go on, and yet in writing this observation, I realize perfectly well that I have seen equally fantastic doings, seemingly impossible, rock along year in and year out. In my opinion, she should have someone sleeping in the same room with her every night, and yet if I began enumerating the million reasons why this simply couldn't be done, I would run through pages.

And on the other hand, while one is bound to admit there is a limit, still I must confess that time and again when things have just reached the snapping point, an unexpected reversal sets in and Lo! before we know what has struck us, everything suddenly whisks back to normalcy. Not more than a hundred times before have I remarked, I think, that it really isn't absolutely imperative, and yet it helps out a lot if you are.....

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King Re 3177

9/17/48

Lota Blythe

9/11/48

Sunday, September 19th, 1948.

Memorandum

The weather was perfect over the week end, and perhaps because of that fact, the pilgrims too many and the visitors lingered too long.

I was glad to spend several hours this afternoon with Dr. Oberdyke, however, for he is a scholar and has much of interest to impart. He brought Frau Oberdyke and a photographer with him. Some interiors of the big house were taken but I declined his request to take interiors of my house. But the light outside was so perfect that they were able to obtain many different views of several of the buildings, and these, together with some notes taken by Frau Oberdyke, will undoubtedly appear in the book the doctor is preparing under a general heading of North Louisiana Houses, with Melrose being the most Southerly of those appearing in the volume.

Dr. and Mrs. McCook were here, too, with their son, Daniel, who returns for his senior year at Harvard next week. They remained until nearly dark, which tangled the Madam's routine inordinately, but she appeared to weather the prolonged sitting pretty well.

I know not if last night was the final one for the Melrose Social Club. Sometimes I think it may not fold up so soon, and sometimes I think it may already be finished.

Last night about 9, one of my little river friends tapped on my window. It was Cholly Boy, a very quiet lad who speaks but seldom and evidences manners that are as charming and retiring as his personality. Cholly Boy wondered if I could write a letter for him. I could. It was addressed to his "Lovin' Sweetheart", and it voiced his regret that some youth in the Cognac area had told some untruths about him that had caused a rift in their relations. A half an hour later, Cholly Boy had departed and I resumed my go round with Romola. A little after dawn this morning, another dusky friend passed this way. He said that about 9:30 last night, Cholly Boy had appeared at the Melrose Social Club where a youth from Cognac taunted him about something or other and Cholly Boy had driven a knife slap through the youth's ribs, and that the latter had been carried away to the hospital. I shall post the letter Cholly Boy dictated, but somehow by Monday it would seem almost to require a post script.

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Among this morning's visitors was Mr. Murphy of Derry, who brought me four grand little kittens, two gray and two pure yellow. These 4, added to the five already galloping up and down my front gallery, plus Dora, the airdale and Charlie, the dachshund, really gives me quite a collection. But the number will decrease shortly, as several of my friends have asked for kittens and the present stock ought to afford much satisfaction in various directions.

At Arenbourg, our sweet olive, perhaps four feet in height, is in full bloom, and of course the perfume is marvelous. I am thinking of planting some more in November if I can discover some in a neighboring nursery. I ordered several last year from different houses, but never could get a delivery. Sweet olives have a curious twist to their personalities unique in the plant world. It isn't too difficult to transplant them, and to keep them alive, but keep alive and making them grow is distinctly a horse of a different hue. I have seen those little old things just sit for years, apparently determined they are going to do nothing at all but remain stationary. This, I interpret to mean, they are not satisfied with the spot selected as a home for them, and so, after a couple of years, one goes to the trouble of giving them another address. Sometimes a four or fifth choice still hasn't suited them, but if one persists, eventually they seem to have no more complaints, and then will begin growing like a weed. Fortunately, the spot selected for the first one I planted at Arenbourg seemed to please the personality of the plant alright, and I believe it is going to make up its mind to climb skyward whenever it gets an opportunity to get a drink during the long summer season.

I think I mentioned the Joe Henrys were here for the week end and Pat came up from L. S. U. I passed by the store on Saturday afternoon with Joe, and together we chatted for a while with an old mulatto, Gustin Serillac, who used to know Joe's grandfather, old Mr. Joe Henry. I enjoyed hearing the old darkie talk of the old days and both Joe and I laughed heartily at the old man's quaint humor, some of it being probably better than he realized.

Said old Gustin "Mr. Joe, I know'd your Grandpa Joe good, and he sure done left you his laugh, 'cause you laughs jus' like you' Grandpa." And at that moment, Payne Henry approached us from the direction of the garage. "And how about my brother, Payne, is he anything like Grandpa Joe?"

"Lord, no" responded old Gustin. "You're the one that's got it all, excusin' one thing....Mr. Payne with them big hips of hisen, all he's got to show from the old folks in you're old Grandpa Joe's rump.".....

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Monday, September 20th, 1948.

Memorandum

How nice to have your two letters with accompanying design of the Wedgewood in this morning's post.

Celeste and Madam regard left for South Louisiana at dawn this morning, and so I shall acquaint them with your efforts on their return on Thursday. I pray you not to put out any effort on this matter, but merely, should your eye chance to note any urns or vases, merely inquire as to particulars.

And how characteristically thoughtful of you to give me the Red Cross advice when circumstances such as those I encountered last week arise. It could happen again, and I am especially glad to know that cold compresses are recommended, for there is always an abundance of ice at hand, plus rubber ice bags. So far as this go round is concerned, only the slightest "rising" remains at the base of my head, and that isn't noticeable, what with my perruque covering the same.

I am so glad you gave me the detailed information about the Hoffman anodynes. I had completely forgotten about them, but on your reference to them, or rather the Hoffman name, I recalled how often they appeared in the ante bellum newspaper advertisements. In the 1850's, especially, as I recall, one was forever running into "Hoffman's Pills", but I never realized at the time that the name Hoffman was probably carrying a particular recommendation to the readers.

And this brings up an allied matter which became more plain to me not so long ago. I used to be impressed by the fact that so many of the ante bellum diaries, letters and newspapers stressed the fact that the departed soul had manifested heroic fortitude until the very end. This point appears so frequently in death announcements that I began wondering why the fact was always underlined so strongly. Then, one day, it dawned on me that a quiet or noble self control was probably remarkable in those days, since no one prior to the 1840's had stumbled on anesthesia, which, I believe, did not come into general use until well after the 1860's. Under such circumstances, it was of course perfectly natural for anyone on the point of death, induced by a million causes, might well suffer the tortures of the damned without any hope of procuring as much relief as an asperin tablet. I have no doubt that most deaths were inclined to be painful, and probably, for that very reason, the writers of obituaries

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found it both flattering to the departed in all cases, and worthy of report, if the circumstance were a fact, that the individual really did manifest signs of real control over his bodily pains in his final hours.

From the presence of the name of Hoffman in these early newspapers, in the patent medicine section, I conclude that these tablets must have been one of the earlier forms of anodyne that stood for mercy for many a tormented soul in the days before ether and anacin.

It was good of you to give me particulars about the disastrous episode in the Southern migration of the warblers when so many were injured and killed when striking the Empire State building. I had heard a clipped sentence one morning state that several birds had been killed on striking buildings while flying over Manhattan, but that was all, and your account has given me a clear picture of what really happened.

And how glad I am to learn that you chanced to see an egret in the Tuxedo area. I know that neighborhood fairly well, and should imagine it would approximate many a more Southerly locality where they might have summered, had the vast expanse of D. D. T.'s in varying forms, discouraged them from remaining on their former "stamping" ground. While I think of it, do I understand it that an egret and an egret are the same kind of bird, with merely a different spelling attached by Anglo-Saxon and Latin languages.

Every year one sees so many of these birds and long legged herons on the Montrose Lane and along Little River, but not having been on the Montrose Lane this year, I can't say if they lingered on in this section or not.

From the Postell enclosure, you will gather, as did I, that if we don't watch out, we're going to have a mathematical interpretation to local history. I must write my correspondent to night to return his map and to tell him the Jean Baptiste Prudhomme plantation was or rather is known as Live Oak. And I am perfectly certain that none of the Prudhommes ever called their plantations by American names, and that sets me to wondering how in the world one would translate "Live Oak" into French. Any way I try it sounds perfectly ridiculous, and as soon as I begin to diagnose the meaning in English, it seems even more hilarious. I wonder if anyone ever hit on an idea of calling a particular type of maple a "Live maple", or a "Live elm". Heaven knows there are enough dead ones, thanks to the Japanese beetle.

Well, Lord, here I am all run out, and just getting started. But I shall be back again on the morrow, hoping the while that your week end in New England proved ever so delightful. I suppose the leaves must be starting to turn and in the mountains their full glory must be almost upon one....

Albena 3181
R.D. 9/10

Tuesday, September 21st, 1948.

Memorandum

How nice to have your sketch of the Wedgewood vase and your wonderfully news filled letter.

It's wonderful what a picture does to illumine one's understanding of an object, and I can well picture the original creations, and they must be grand. I am quite certain that Celeste will not put as much money in these objects of art as the owners ask, but since they are 18th century originals, it seems to me the price isn't excessive for the collector who can afford items from the Wedgewood atelier when it was at its height.

I was quite surprised to learn of the new Parisk Theatre in the Bergdorf Goodman neighborhood. I have difficulty in imagining what its Neon signs must look like in that swanky section of 5th Avenue. I remember how astonished I was when the first Neons appeared on the Champs Elysees, and somehow their first gleam heralded the passing of an era which up until then I had always easily peopled in my own imagination with people in costumes of the period when Mr. Jefferson had his house in the "heavenly fields".

I hope Mother Nature did her part in sweeping the skies clear over the week end in the New England area so you could travel through that lovely countryside with the added glory of a full moon. It sounds to me like quite a jaunt for such a short period, but I must realize that I am so much of a recluse that I always fail to measure such trips of the past with my present tendency to look on a journey from here to Arenbourg as quite an adventure in the big wide world. After all, I might put on my thinking cap and recall how once I used to leave Manhattan at 4 on a Sunday afternoon to enjoy a picnic supper of cold chicken and Burgundy in the little old graveyard behind the lovely Christopher Wrenn Church at Old Lyme, Connecticut, and at the time, that didn't seem too extraordinary, especially if a moon was in our favor.

From the two enclosures, you will note that at least two Louisiana ladies are contemplating the forthcoming "Friends of Joe Gilmore" with some trepidation. I am wondering if I would be throwing spasms into the Dove Cote of Hastings House if I should pen them a single line on Estate

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stationary, reading

"Miss Robina, Miss Alberta join Miss Cammie in seriously considering the report that "The Friends of Joe Gilmore" is to appear in print".

I shall not write to Mr. Dryer, but I do think he has been short sighted in not having dropped a friendly line to his contemporaries who are probably figuring in the book.

As for myself, I continue to "hold the thought" that for one reason or another, the chapter in which I figured will not get into the book. What with Lyle's somewhat strange mental processes in his last years and the unpredictable editing that might issue from Mr. Dryer's pen, and what the results might be could be anybody's nightmare.

On the Cane River front, one of Puny's boistrous step twins has had another go at excitement. Big Six who purchased a second hand car on the installment basis with funds he receives, one hundred dollars per month, for educational pursuits, succeeded in running smack into a car driven by white folks in Natchitoches on Saturday. It didn't do much damage to either car and no one was hurt, but Big Six pulled out from the mild wreckage and fled to the woods where a Sheriff's posse picked him up shortly afterward. His excuse for leaving the scene of the accident so swiftly and hiding in the woods was what he thought he heard one of the white occupants of the other car say to a companion, giving Big Six the impression they planned to beat him. I know not if this was true or if Big Six was merely frightened at the results of his carelessness.

In any event, he was arrested, and promptly bailed out by J. H. and so remained home on Sunday, the accident having occurred Saturday evening. Monday was the trial and his fine and payment of repairs to the occupants of the other car totaled a hundred dollars.

Big Six seems to have a genius for getting into minor scrapes, and seems to be lucky enough to get out without much damage to his hide, although when he raped the mulatto girl in St. Paul's graveyard a couple of months back, it really looked as though he might at least get some skin off his shins, but somehow he wiggled through that alright, too. Six is a bag, if you don't mind.

I worked at slaying Johnson grass too late this morning, and so my whole day has never caught up. But although it is rather late, I want to read Elizabeth Brownings "Sonnets from the Portuguese" before folding, for I like them and have them to hand, and I shall think of Lydia the while....

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Calamus Wardley 3183
9/21

Wednesday, September 22nd, 1948.

Memorandum

"And so Mr. Budd done lost his Nature," I heard Aurellia inquire of Mattie when I passed by the big house this morning.

"Yeah," was Mattie's response. "Sam Brown's wife done got Papa's Nature and all his Old Age Pension check, too."

So far as I know, "loosing one's Nature" is a local phrase, indicating one has been bereft of all sex impulse.

Since Mattie's papa is perhaps 75 or 80, one naturally falls back on the old saw that there is a time and place for everything, but Mattie, greatly excited, explained the whole thing to me later. She declared that Sam Brown's wife, after considerable labor, got a drop of Budd's semen, dried it in the sunshine and then burned it, and that by so doing, Mr. Budd would henceforth be impotent but would still be subject to the enchantments of Sam Brown's wife to the extent of yielding up whatever checks came his way.

Voodoo (pronounced "Whodoo" by the darkies) invariably rises to the surface automatically when a death occurs in the neighborhood. Lizzie Marcel, a negress, died early this morning. I suppose her death was due to starvation, for three weeks ago when Dr. Wenk was here, he was called to examine her and he told me he really thought she had already died when he first glanced at her. She has been blind for years, ever since her husband, Jack, treated her for sore eyes by putting shoe blacking in them. She has been out of her mind for years, too, and has been pretty much alone most of the time, since Jack spent most of his days and much of his nights in the big road. In summer and winter the house always remained tight shut, windows and doors. It is a little half tumbled down cabin which must have been freezing in winter, when Jack was seldom home to build a fire, and boiling in summer, what with its tin roof and not too many large vents. I think Jack seldom fed her on anything but plug tobacco, and that she survived a single season, let alone a decade, was a miracle.

Dr. Wenk sent her to the hospital after one look at her, but her husband went and got her the next day. It was a terrible case but one which, through technicalities, prevented an outsider from doing anything about. Jack is a quack or a "Whodoo" doctor, and it is he who has attended Bessie's baby on occasion and passed silver over "Cousin" Loog's ankle when she was bitten by a snake.

Having practiced his Art on her so long and having ended up by starving her to death, Jack now sets up a great cry, and plans a fine wake for her on Friday night, so a frolic is guaranteed

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for this week end.

You will find the enclosure mildly interesting, if it strikes you, as it does me, that evidence of a slight crack seems to be making itself manifest in the domestic set up, or is my seismograph gone imaginative rather than supersensitive.

Instead of supping at 4:30 or 5 tonight, we didn't get around to do so until nearly 7. J. H. was busy with cotton and Dan got lost somewhere in the shuffle earlier in the evening. I was interested when Dan told J. H. that somebody in town had secured a scholarship at L. S. U. for some Natchitoches youth, and Dan asked J. H. what he thought about getting one for Pat. J. H. thought it a good idea, and said he would see Secretary Fredericks about it on Sunday. Governor Long called the Legislature into extraordinary session, as of tonight, for a 12 day sitting, and so I take it ex Senator Fredericks will be in Baton Rouge during that period, so I conclude that J. H. must be planning to be down that way this week end. With all the financial backing behind Pat, I am amazed that a scholarship should be thought of for him, but I reckon the willingness of an individual such as J. H. to grab off a few hundred dollars of funds set aside for others whose lack of any financial standing justifies J. H.'s right to being known as an excellent business man. Civic Virtue and the Touch of Midas, I take it, do not always go hand in hand.

In spite of my sleepiness last night, I really enjoyed Elizabeth Browning's Sonnets from the Portuguese, which I read a couple of times over before retiring. I recommend them to your consideration, should you chance across them, for there was something in Robert Browning's assertion that "they are the best sonnets written in any language since Shakespeare". Perhaps the husband was exaggerating a little, but his natural pride in them is understandable, and especially as they were written to him.

One thought came up in the introduction that made me realize I had an incorrect concept of Mrs. Browning's health. I had somehow supposed her unable to walk much, but according to the preface in this edition, Mr. Browning speaks of the house in Pisa where the Brownings lived, and where his wife was in the habit of flying up and down stairs with apparent abandon. I was certainly glad to know the lady was so much better equipped for getting about than I had supposed. I must have seen Katherine Cornie on the Barrett sofa too many times.

Tonight I'm planning to read a few short stories by Henry van Dyke, under the title of The Blue Flower. They begin with a translation from the German of the story by the German poet, Novalis, or some such. Can you eventually imagine what German poet I have in mind whose name sounds something like Novalis or some such. There was some other point I wanted to touch upon but it eludes me completely, but perhaps it will occur to me at our next sitting.....

Hogan - Tulane Univ.
9/24/48
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Thursday, September 23rd, 1948.

Memorandum

First off, I invite your attention to the enclosures.

And now, if your blood is at the proper boiling point, you perhaps won't mind if I point out that both Mr. Veith and Dr. Hogan are bags.

In the morning post came two letters from Tulane, a Registered one to "Mrs. Cammie G. Henry" or whatever the address is on the enclosure, and the other to "Mrs. J. D. Henry", intended, I assume, for Celeste. The one to Celeste was a duplicate of the one to the Madam. And why Dr. Hogan should write to Celeste on this subject, I can't imagine, since he has never seen her in his life.

And just to think the whole thing got started because of my wish that when the diary appeared in print, it might be properly annotated to cover the missing parts. I must say that my original good intentions have swirled me into a fine mess, thanks to Mr. Veith's breaking my confidence. But perhaps the most hilarious aspect of the whole business is the statement by Dr. Hogan that Mrs. Moore hinted I had obtained the diary by or under false pretenses. For as a mere matter of record, the original diary is actually in the hands of Madam Moore herself.

Apparently what the Messrs. Veith and Hogan need more than anything else is a copy of "How to Win Friends and Influence People", for they might have succeeded in gaining all required data for the publication in question if they had attempted some other means than high pressure, innuendoes and blasts on their trumpets at the Melrose store, in Natchez and the medium of the two ladies receiving their letters in today's post.

Today, being Knipmayer Day, both the doctor and his wife appeared, this being the first time since last May that Frau Knipmayer could make it. They had something to say about their new grandson, Robert, born last night, and from that I coyly remarked that Celeste had told me of a party last Sunday at Magnolias and did they go. Of course what I wanted to find out was the answer to the lady doctor's question as to why the knipmayers quitted the place so abruptly. They said they had attended the party but hadn't remained long, "since it is impossible for white people and colored people to mix". Smart me, I had all I could do to ask about the mulatto situation, but I somehow contained myself.

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I have often heard it said that there is nothing so fanatical in this world as a converted atheist, and since Dr. Knipmayer hails from Illinois, perhaps he tends to prove the statement in plantation realms. But with another wife, I think Dr. Knipmayer might really have developed into quite a good egg in the department of racial amenities, for I suspect it has been Madam Knipmayer, born in New Orleans, who has called the tune in such matters. Harnett Kane always struck me as being more lacking in understanding of the negro than anyone I ever knew. And I always suspected that this was not because he was born in circumstances in New Orleans that prevented him from knowing people of color but rather because he was so self centered and lacking in any sense of the humanities that he could scarcely be expected to have any feeling for the negro when he obviously had never developed any sympathy for members of his own race.

Madam Knipmayer is not precisely in that group, but rather in that broader but dumber set who points backward with pride to the days when she used to swing on her Aunt Jemima's breast, but, because of her uncertainty of her own social standing, would simply die if she had to spill a spot of tea with any of Aunt Jemima's offspring. Right there, I suppose, is the real reason why the Knipmayers were so unhappy with the Worsleys, the Herzogs, Celeste, Madam Regard and the rest at Magnolia on Sunday, for the birthday party was an out of doors affair in celebration of the natal day of Magnolia's old cook, Rosa, who, by the way, stirs up dinner 52 times a year on Thursdays for the Knipmayers. Wasn't it Mrs. Roosevelt who was asked if she didn't find it awfully difficult as to what to do when confronted by some social problem that had never been covered by Miss Emily Post, to which she responded "No," explaining she had always found that if one proceeded on one's natural impulse toward kindness, there were no difficult social problems.

And after the Knipmayers had departed a little after 11, and just before dinner and 11:30, a Mrs. Avalon Metcalf from California arrived. She has been taking movies of the sugar, rice and cotton industries and culture in Louisiana for some civic groups in California, and wanted to use Melrose for the cotton shots. And so she broke bread with us, and we lingered over coffee, she with her note book and I with an endless flow of talk. And having dined on fried chicken and practically die on the talk, she eventually got around to her color cameras, and I hope got a heap of mileage for her pains.

And where in the world do you reckon little Miss Alberta may be tonight. I believe she said she was putting the Crescent City today, but that wouldn't necessarily mean she would make it all in one hop. Somehow I envision her rounding the bend astride a Camel, but that is mere flight of fancy. It's now after ten o'clock and quite dark outside, but there is a special God for all the little Miss Albertas in the world and so I'm sure she will eventually make it, this week or next.....

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Dora 9/20

Friday, September 24th, 1948.

Memorandum

And Lo! along about 9:30 this morning arrived little Miss Alberta, the self same little Alice au pays des merveilles, starrie eyed and oblivious to everything except what make her happy.

And her ankles of late haven't been in that category, for she confides to Aurellia they have been swelling much of late, indeed a remarkable confidence, since formerly her concept of Mary Baker Eddyism forbade her to admit it even when she cut off the end of her finger in an electric fan.

Well, so things change, and with them changes little Miss A.'s method of painting. Every summer she goes to Cape Cod or Eureka Springs or Hope, Pennsylvania, and she always comes back with a new slant on Art and a new technique of getting it that way.

This year, she declares, she paints all colors in equal values, reds, greens blues yellows and so on. And then, after this ultra striking smear has been completed, she begins working over the various colors to tone them down or step them up to suit the particular spot this or that color occupies and with a mind to bring the whole worked over set of daubs into a wonderful harmony.

That is the 1948 key to the Art of painting. In 1949 it will be something quite radically different, and so it will run annually throughout the 50's, if little Miss A. continues to run that long.

She didn't have so much to offer by way of gossip. Bob Tallant told her that Eddy Dryer told him that Hastings House advanced Lyle a thousand dollars on "The Friends of Joe Gilmore", and that it was for that sole reason that Eddy whipped the manuscript into shape. It seems that Eddy wrote an somewhat extended biographical sketch of Mr. Saxon to accompany the Memories.

And little Miss A. says that many photographs are going to be u and that she was asked to supply glossy prints of one of her oils of a cotton gin and something else which I don't recall.

She also said she heard some of the manuscript, and the thing she liked best was the chapter in which Fugabou figures.

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I never heard that one, and so I am hoping against hope that it may have been written after Lyle's last trip to Melrose, and that he substituted it for the Natchez one wherein I made my bow.

On broader fields, little Miss A. gave the Madam and me a symposium on various aspects of American political manifestations and ended up by announcing that she is way out in front in favor of the Dixiecrats. I was a little stunned at first to learn of her flyer into this numbskull collection of hill billies, but then I suddenly recalled that while little Miss A. seems to like some of the local darkies, she is quite as race conscious as all the other Dixiecrats, and what with having hailed from Fizzleville, Ohio, she loves to set me straight on such matters, "being Southern", as she explains. In short, little Miss A. is a sight.

There had been some gossip about Lyle's two Baton Rouge aunts, Miss Maude and Miss Lizzie, and I assume this must explain for part, and the political jumble the other, when, after the Royal Street artist had gone to paint, my patient, somewhat befogged, but quite seriously, asked me

"What book is that that Lyle wrote on Lizzyography."

I inquired a second time to make sure I had understood correctly and then jockeyed the conversation around to another literary point in which we soon got lost sufficiently to forget "Lizzyography".

If I weren't consumed with fear that you might chuck a brick at me, I would like to repeat the old saw "You don't have to be, but it helps out a lot if you are...."

This afternoon Miss Etty Levy and Aunt Lottie came down and sat too long and for an hour after the Madam's bed time. Talking a mile a minute, Miss Ette at 50 looks a hundred, while saying nothing, Aunt Lottie at 85 gives the impression of being about her niece's age as recorded by the calendar. But I didn't get much out of their visit. Perhaps I was a little sleepy, for I had been contending with Johnson grass on the terrace at Arenbourg before daylight while the air was deliciously cool and the surface of Cane River wonderfully silver.

In about five minutes, I am going to jump into a hot bath, and afterwards read a couple of pages of an endless book, "Men of God", recorded by Eugene O'Neil, Jr. I have read this work before, and certainly wouldn't refresh my memory at the moment, had I some of the volumes I had expected from New Orleans today. But this volume will unravel a few tangled threads, after which I shall have one page of the Gospel of St. John, and so to bed.

The moon rises so late these nights, but it is pleasant to find it lingering on in the sky along about 4 in the morning....

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Sunday, September 26th, 1948.

Memorandum

Were it not for the dryness, the weather would be marvelous, cool and all blue and gold.

One refreshing compensation of the forgetful mind is the forever recurring surprises that probably shouldn't be classed as surprises at all, if one would but remember a phenomenon from season to season. A case in point enchanted me about 2:30 this morning when the rising moon cast a mellow radiance on my gallery giving into the White Garden. It is my understanding that this house faces South, and what with the White garden on the North, I don't seem to recall ever noticing that the moon ever before rose so far North of East in September as to create this surprise. But even though I may have witnessed it before, I couldn't remember, and so my delight was complete.

The week end was quiet, with but a few pilgrims and even lesser visitors. Mrs. Rand came late this afternoon, bringing a couple of friends with her, and on departing presented me with a favorite wine, Triple Sec Sherry by Cresta Blanca. I don't care much about Sherry, and have no idea what a good grade of Cresta Blanca Port would be like, Port being my favorite, but this Sherry is exceptional.

Dr. Rand came to the camp this afternoon, and wanted me to join them for late supper. But other guests came to Melrose just as Mrs. Rand was leaving, and it was dark before the last of them was gone, and I'm sure the Rands had departed by then.

I learned from Mrs. Rand that Dr. Rand has the type of diabetes that unless carefully checked, is likely to put the victim into a coma at any old time without a moment's warning, and so he is going to keep to a very strict diet from here on out. Being completely ignorant about such matters, I had always supposed that diabetes was diabetes without a vast assortment of types and varieties.

I was particularly glad to take the two ladies accompanying her with me on a little tour, while she chatted with the Madam, for I learned the niece of one of the ladies had gone blind 8 or 9 months ago when giving birth to a child, and that none of the family had ever heard of the Reading Machine, for that gave me an opportunity to spread the good word in the right direction, and after hearing mine, the lady was determined to do something about

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one for her niece on the morrow. I'm beginning to believe the Library of Congress ought to give me a commission for all the business I have been throwing their way of late.

I take it Day Light savings must have come to an end today, for I tried to get Joseph Harsh at 1130 on Columbia, and Lo! in his stead, I got the C. B. S. Was There program. Today's had to do with the trial of Ann Hutchinson along about 1637 up Massachusetts way and recalled to mind another witch trial I had heard on the same program some months ago. The Battle of Bull Run, the 1st battle, is scheduled for next week, and sounds rather unpromising, for all the racket accompanying their rendition of battles leaves me a little cold. Personally I have liked their trials better than their more colossal portrayals.

One of the ladies has a rather wide acquaintance in literary sections in the Gulf States, and she had a Kane tale you will like. She says it is a joke among booksellers and private clubs where Kane on occasion has asked if he might spend a day or a half day autographing his books that he intentionally fails to provide himself with a pen for that purpose, but even though stationary shops may be in the same building or in the same block, he hasn't the slightest idea of spending a sou on one, but invariably borrows one from any one he can. After signing his autograph enough times, the pen greatly lessened in value to its owner, naturally, what with the difference in handling it, etc. but so long as Mr. Kane doesn't have to pay for any ink and saves wear and tear on his own pen, he doesn't mind at all what happens to the property of others. Such a saving soul, he really ought to have acquired quite an imposing heap of money when he gets ready to move on to the next world, in hopes, no doubt, of taking it with him.

I sent Dr. Hogan a letter Saturday, hard on the heels of the Madam's. I pointed out that I had supposed he had wished to do business with me, but since he had introduced personalities having nothing to do with the case, and without my knowledge, he had, by that token, brought the negotiations to a final termination automatically, and that I appreciated his courtesy and wished him much success in his present line of endeavor. All that, of course, was singing psalms to a dead mule but the circumstance may stick in his mind, coming to the surface again, should he ever read the line of Bouddah, remarking upon the futility of trying to injure people, remarking that such efforts are like a man trying to throw a handful of dirt at another when the wind is contrary.

If there was ever any doubt in your mind that there was something wrong with my head, that intuition will be confirmed when I tell you I contemplate studying German, and am writing the American Foundation to inquire if they have records for the reading machine similar to those formerly put on the market by some commercial house, Cortina, or some such name. It would be so nice sometimes to be able to pen "Mensch Meyer" and know how to spell it.....

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Edwin Harding Sr.

9/14 3191

RD 9/15 re

Special Delivery

Monday, September 27th, 1948.

Memorandum

The elegant, cool, but dry, weather continues.

The enclosures speak for themselves. I certainly hope I may do something about tracking down some of the 1853 Natchez compositions. I shall start the wheels turning by sending a flock of letters to various people in Natchez, but those people so seldom take pen in hand, I presume not much can be done before I go and poke around a little myself.

Mr. Harding, I may not have mentioned before. He has a camp on Melrose, down below Clemence's and Ezra's. Mrs. Rand's father started him out in business half a century ago, and apparently it was a good start, for he has been retired these many years, and spends half his time on Cane River and half in Alexandria.

I declined the invitation on three grounds, because we dine at 1130, because my secretary has a daily appointment with me at 12 and because there was a chance I might regret skipping the mail. But first class mail was thin to start with and my secretary got lost and noon and never did show up until 7 o'clock tonight.

But in declining the invitation, I asked Mr. Harding and his friend to come to Melrose at 2, which they did, and so we had quite a pleasant sitting here for a couple of hours. His friend in 79 and needs to know about the Reading Machine. He lived in Louisiana all his life and from his childhood memories and accounts of life talked over in his family circle, he had much to tell me about Reconstruction Days in this section of the State, and I liked it.

Little Miss Tubman, under the cover of "A Clouded Star" arrived today. The Madam says it starts off fine. I shall probably not get to hear it, but before folding up my beard tonight, I had better acknowledge its receipt, which will, by that promptness give me an excellent excuse for not referring with any intelligence to the contents.

Little Miss Alberta has cut herself out quite a job, in deciding to paint an interior of Dr. Miller's cabin, with Aurelia lost in a corner. Dr. Miller's cabin is very low, with roofs extending far over the two entrances and the single window, making

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place rather on the shadowy side. Add to this fact that little Miss A. can't see so well without spectacles, and the coposition ought to be highly imaginative, I should imagine. For little Miss A. will not wear glasses, fearing they will tend to make her look old, and that, of course, compels her to proceed daubing in the shadows, or compromise by slinging paint with one hand as she balances her lorgnettes with the other, and what such acrobatics may bring forth, the Lord alone knows.

Celeste and Madam Regard are back, and I laid the Wedgewood matter before Celeste who is genuinely appreciative of your kindness but says she wouldn't care to invest that much money in eh urns. She hopes that some day Dame Fortune will unveil a contemporary pair at some sacrificial price, and I have no doubt if a Dewey victory should turn into a Hoover boom, items of this type, but of 20th century manufacture, might become more plentiful.

J. H.'s birthday is on Sunday, and Celeste has asked us for dinner, and in doing so, I think she is cutting herself a larger slab of cake than she is bargaining for. According to Paynie, who was in Baton Rouge last week, the General and his wife are coming this week end. I might be wrong, but I have an idea the Wenks might also blow in. Surely it will not be possible for the Madam to go, although I shouldn't put it past her offspring to urge her to try. To quote the Madam under other circumstances: "Anything you do is alright, but don't do it."

In my reading last night of the presence of mysticism in the writings of the Greek philosophers, I was delighted to learn of the devaluation of the word Academy, which I had not known before. It seems Plato, when visiting Sicily, had been betrayed to the Spart and put up for sale as a slave. He was purchased by a former admirer and set free. Friends of Plato in Athenes raised the huge sum involved in the transaction and sent it to the friend who had expended the money, but he refused it and sent it back to Greece whither Plato had gone. It was eventually turned over to Plato, and he purchased a park or grove a mile outside Athenes where he established his famous school which was to out live him by six centuries. The park thus purchased had formerly been owned by a man named Academus, so that the tract of ground and then the school took on his name, and thence traveled down the centuries to our time.

The cool weather must be having its effect on local citizens, for when I passed by the gin this morning, I was surprised to find everybody revealing no effects of an alcoholic hold over. With all the moving belts, and whirling machinery, the gin has always seemed to me a most likely place for an accident on Mondays, but up to now, I never had heard of anyone on Melrose getting tangled up in the presss. There must be something to the old adage about a special God for fools and drunks....

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Tuesday, September 28th, 1948.

Memorandum

I'm so sorry to learn of your illness and the consequent impossibility of making the trip across New England.

By now, I hope with all my heart, you are well back on Recovery Road and that this early autumn cold may eliminate any other that might have been on the docket for mid Winter visitation.

But I must say that even though New England was denied you, you made up for lost time in another direction and I am the richer for your generosity in sharing your "voyage autour de votre chambre" with me.

And having just completed a trip along the Joyous Coast under Lestan's guidance, the enclosed map may prove especially timely. It came to hand today, and I haven't had time to go over it with any. But I assume Live Oak plantation of Jean Baptiste Prudhomme probably centers the piece, since the Postell labors were concentrated on papers covering that property. If Live Oak does appear, then just below it, to the South, Bermuda should be noted, and that, of course is the heart of the Joyous Coast, where Lestan lived, as did his Uncle Phanor at Oaklawn or Oakland, his ncle Narcisse at St. Charles, and so on, including Aunt Benjamin a little further down the river on the plantation today called Ty po, where Uncle Phanor's great grand daughter, Mrs. Sam Tobin, lived until her recent and outrageous divorce.

I don't reckon Arenbourg appears on this particular map, but I'm sure you will find not difficulty in placing it.

How nice to learn that news has come through from the Pongs. Isn't it interesting that the lady had some doubts as to whom the letter from this quarter was addressed. As a State, old Kansas has always had a somewhat dubious status in my mind, but for once, at least, it served a good purpose

Returning momentarily to Lestan's diary, I laughed to myself at the vague parallel between Lestan's vast business about heading off for school, and after all the emotional sprees attendant thereon, he finally did break away and immediately on reaching Natchitoches, the first thing he did was to turn around and come back to the Joyeuse Cote for a frolic, and all this stacked-up against your little Venezuelan number and his prolonged jaunt from New York to Worcester, Mass., where, upon arrival, he looses little time in hurrying back to Manhattan to contact the girl friend just arriving from South America. In Lestan's case, the trip was not more than a ten mile journey, with a Prudhomme house never out

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of sight during the entire trip, which does make it quite different from the present case, but the impulse to get back to the starting point so quickly does seem along similar lines.

Little Miss Alberta's friend, Nina McInnes, came down from Shreveport this afternoon and will remain at Melrose for several days I believe. She is an excellent artist and not at all the dizzy type of little Miss A. I believe her husband went to L. S. U. at the same time some of the younger Henry boys did. He is of an old Baton Rouge family, possessed of plantations in that area, who have always maintained an old home in the Garden District of New Orleans, etc. Nina finds life a bit on the dull side in Shreveport, I think, and as her husband is not too enthusiastic about her interest in Art, I think there must be an element of dissatisfaction in the domestic set up. Last Winter, Nina's people took a cruise up the Congo, I believe, and I think there was much pondering on her part whether it were best to be noble and dull in Shreveport during the period of the African journey, or if it might not be better to put a little strain on the domestic set up and at least have the satisfaction of capturing a few oils and water colors in the heart of the Dark Continent.

I asked her if she attend Sister's Friday night party. She said she did, and although Sister had asked her to come late, as she requested several other people, so they might linger after the crowd had thinned out, Nina said she went early and quitted the reception with others who were going on to a delightful and more recherche gathering at another private home. She learned on Saturday morning that her choice in deserting the Winks early had been an excellent one, for it seems that after most of the people had left the Wink party, and those bidden to come late to remain for supper, were suddenly thunderstruck, just as they were settling back for a pleasant evening when Sister suddenly appeared in a dressing gown, declaring the party was over, that there would be no more champagne served and that she wished everyone would leave so she might go to bed. Nina says everyone present, thinking themselves the most honored guests, were furious. And so it appears that "The Kiss of the Gods" turned out to be but a kick in the pants, which, I should say, off hand, is about what everyone who thought they were going to have fun there, deserved.

A letter from an Iowa nursery today states that they carry the tree variety of Chinese magnolias, and that they can make delivery any time after February 1st, a remarkable circumstance, what with all the snow blanketing that area in Winter. That is the perfect time for planting them in Louisiana and I think we ought to have quite a few, don't you. And speaking of plants, you ask about the appearance of the *Franklinia Altamaha*, and mya I respond that it resembles the Chinese magnolias considerably, being of the deciduous magnolia family, but while the Chinese magnolias usually bloom in February and March, the *Franklinia* comes into full flower in mid summer. So much to chat about, and yet I'd better spill into bed rather than onto another page, adios.....

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Wednesday, September 29th, 1948.

Memorandum

I have had a couple of mild shocks in the past couple of days which I will mention first.

In speaking of some person or other this morning, Aurellia declared that the individual had real pretty hair, "but it ain't quite so red like yours". Me and my red hair. I certainly would love to know what Aurellia calls brown, but I guess I do, come to think of it, and what she calls red, which I don't.

And this morning, along about the same time, she told me of a little jaunt she and Essie had made down to Mr. Hyman's store, and that on the way, they had stopped to see Clemence. It seems little Mary Frances had come back to stay with her and to have her baby with Clemence's help next month. She said Mary Frances's legs and throat and face were quite badly swollen. That gave me a start, and accordingly, be adept in getting into other people's business, I made it a point to drop by Clemence's house, seemingly on a casual call, with a view of persuading Mary Frances to consult the lady doctor, or, should that undertaking be too vast, to let me ask Dr. Knipmayer to drop in to see her on Thursday, when on his way from Melrose to Magnolia. But on reaching Clemence's gate, I met her daughter, Jackie, who told me Mary Frances had already had her child and that it had just died. Then and there, of course, I realized that my greatest contribution to the situation would be to evaporate immediately, which I did.

And in the big house last night, little Miss Nina McInnes got a start. Perhaps she wasn't sleeping so sound as usual, since it was her first night here, but be that as it may, she awoke along about 2 o'clock, thinking she heard someone in the room. She asked "Who's there", but there was no response. This thoroughly awakened her and then she was certain she heard someone moving about, and a second later, a light hand was laid on her feet. That was too much, and letting self control recede and self preservation come to the fore, she screamed to Miss Alberta, occupying an adjoining room. Well, little Miss Alberta faintly answered, but only faintly, for it turned out that the prowler in the bed chamber was none other than little Miss Alberta herself, and on recognizing her, Nina piloted her back to her own room where little Miss A. remained until this morning when she was quite surprised to learn of her nocturnal "Yoyage au tour".

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I had a telephone call around 9 this morning from Frau Dr. Yaeger of Cloutierville, who went to considerable length to explain how sorry she was in being unable to get up this prior to now, but asked if she might come this afternoon. I told her I would kick out the red carpet, possibly brown to Aurellia, at once and that we should be enchanted. It is now 12 hours later and Frau Doctor hasn't put in an appearance as yet.

The lady artists put in quite a full day with their paint pots, concentrating on the big house and the African house during the morning, and on the Melrose bridge, the old one, during the afternoon. As you know, this old structure is headed for destruction almost any time, and with its passing, there will be scant record of its unique design, and never again, too, will a y structure of its type will be erected, what with the high flown and better bridges of contemporary engineering mastery.

Just before daylight this morning, a dark figure tapped on my boudoir window. It was the third son of Dee Dee Boy, a youth of some 15 or 16 summers. He said he had had to come up from Little River early on horseback and that these cooler, damper mornings had put him in mind of a jacket I had given him a year ago, and so he had thought of me and wanted to bring me a little sack of native pecanes. Before he knew it, the big house had disgorged some toast and bacon and some steaming hot chocolate, which seemed to delight this rider of the dawn, who, within half an hour was again astride his steed and disappearing into the heavy fog bank muffling the landscape.

In passing by the gin yesterday, I noticed some serial numbers on the bales which Ezra was daubing on as each new bale came from the press. I don't recall how many hundred bales have been turned out for other neighboring planters but the numbers on the bales were high. Ezra says that Melrose itself has turned out four hundred bales of its own cotton thus far, and the five hundred mark will be exceeded shortly. With cotton selling around 32 cents, and each bale averaging four or five hundred pounds, and with cotton seed bringing from 75 to 100 dollars, each 500 pound bale of lint representing about 700 or 800 pounds of seed, the tonnage in the latter mounts fast, and what with a pecane crop of hundreds of thousands of pounds dripping from the trees, Melrose will undoubtedly find 1948 a bumper year.

Well, so things turn, and I have to go and turn on the hose to soad the ground well tonight so angle worms can come to the surface during the night, for a fishing expedition is scheduled for the morrow, which I shall not attend, even though it will be from the terrace of Arenbourg, where, it is said by the darkies who probably that of all spots on game stocked Cane River, that spot is where fish are most plentiful. I make more imposing progress with my hone atop the terrace than with a fishpole below....

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Thursday, September 30th, 1948.

Memorandum

Thirty million times would be insufficient to half cover my pleasure in receiving an elegant letter with enclosures from Lydia in this morning's post. Should you see her before I, would you convey to her some measure of my happiness, underlining my added estacy in feeling her own green hand so close to mine as the planting season unfolds and shade and fruit trees for future summers are started on their way and shrubs of marvelous perfume get the join support from such a wholly satisfactory combination.

The dry season continues but what has held this far, I should think, should stand anything the weather man can trot out, and greater vigor and enthusiasm will go into the join planting this November and December, what with the promise of water for next Spring and summer. How much labor dissolves into sheer joy when two shoulders are pushing the wheel together.

My day has been a busy one, and the morning itself was so taken up with gardening, etc., that I never did get around to see Dr. Knipmayer. Each day I try to allot a certain amount of time to Arenbourg regardless, and so today I extended my time there, what with the lady artist needing a little assistance in digging worms and getting properly located for her flight into fishing.

We lingered at table after supper, and she told me something about herself. I believe her mother died when she was a baby and she was brought up by old people, her grandfather and grandmother, whom she adored. They owned property in the neighborhood of the far flung King Ranch in Texas, and she and the daughter of the latter place were school mates and college chums. At the King Ranch, at Christmas time, both girls met young men whom they both married. The daughter of the King plantation died a short time after her marriage. Nina's husband, an Englishman, died two years after their marriage. Then Nina went to New Orleans paint, and discovering old Mrs. McInnes, feel quite in love with her, what with the memory of her own grandmother. Mrs. McInnes, mere, was pleased when her son asked Nina to marry him. This marriage, however, has not turned out satisfactory, since Mr. McInness is a five cent cigar, quite engrossed in making money and carrying not at all for Nina's artistic and literary friends.

During the war he borrow fifty thousand dollars in cash from Nina which she feels she should get back before they divorce each other. Aside from that cash which he has borrow, Nina has property of her own in Texas, a ranch and an apartment house, which brings her some like 8 or 10 thousand dollars a year, so she is not worried about

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the financial outlook for the future but naturally feels it would be better to straighten out the fifty thousand dollar cash item before starting life over again.

She is about 40, I suppose, and is very intelligent and attractive, and I am glad we shall have her on our list for the Arenbourg of tomorrow, for I think she would harmonize nicely with others who will one day grace our gallery.

I apologize for giving you all these details; but somehow I want you to have some knowledge of these people whose orbits cross over Arenbourg, for then when they re-cross, they will perhaps seem more like old friends than new acquaintances.

I am so glad to have particulars regarding the little finance number and his wife. I am glad for their sakes that everything seem alright and to their liking, but I must say I marvel at anyone who can go to so much trouble as the lady in the case did, and then flop slap back into the same situation from which she went to so much pains to extricate herself.

I have often found myself thinking of the Delirium Tremens case and hoping the matter may eventually right itself, although I must confess I never heard of anyone getting back again on the right road once the lower pathway had been followed for very long. I used to think it was a pity Lyle threw his life away on drink, but one thing I shall never know, and that is if he would have had the cancer, had he not caroused so mightily, and if he would have had it any way, perhaps all the liquor he drank was to the good, since he collapsed before the malignant growth ever got a chance to make its inevitable inroads on him, which, had he been stronger, might have persisted over a period of months or years to his greater distress.

In answer to your request, I am enchanted to enclose a butterfly lily blossom. I had supposed the perfume evaporated before reaching you. The sweet olive blossoms are temporarily out, but on their next blooming, I shall try enclosing some. Their flowers are ever so tiny, growing in little clusters, almost like a pinch of pink dust, so that aside from these little tufts, there is really no flower at all. It is the accumulation of hundreds of these little tufts on the bush that produces the marvelous fragrance, drifting in transparent clouds from the bush but almost impossible to round up in the individual little flower itself.

Some of my friends have just come, Peter, Mr. Brew, and so on, to help me in moving some furniture, and so I shall have to skip, reserving an account of the same until tomorrow. In the mean time, don't forget to tell Lydia what a grand soul she is and how often thoughts fly from the local terrace to 595.....

Bachelor 9/20 3199

0056

Friday, October 1st, 1948.

Memorandum

It's after 9 and lights gleaming from the big house suggest that the General and his Lady have arrived.

It's been, or should I be more grammatical in saying it has been, an active day, and I am frankly tired, but not at all sleepy, and it's pleasant to indulge in that hour of communion which is the best in the day, regardless of the hands of the clock.

I was at Arenbourg before day when the sound of J. H.'s automobile horn set me off into gales of laughter. How he loves to sound off before dawn, arousing the inmates of the sleeping cabin along his route. I went with him the other morning, just for the pleasure of witnessing his sheer delight in the racket and the hilarious glee of the darkies as one after another came leaping from their doorways as we headed back toward Melrose after our noisy progression down the river a mile or so.

Dan complained bitterly to the Madam yesterday about it, saying she should speak to J. H. about rousing the countryside at such an hour when he for one didn't want to be disturbed.

The negroes wouldn't like it either if Dan were blowing the horn but since it is J. H. who thus hustles them out of their beds, they all giggle and shout and withal love it, because J. H. is always so good natured and resourceful in having fun with them.

This morning seems so far back, I can't remember anything in particular about it, save my industry on the terrace. Mrs. McInnes had considerable success in her fishing exploit off Arenbourg, but she made one vast error in judgement. After catching 8 or 10 fine specimen, she attached them to a line so they might remain fresh in the water while she made a round at Melrose. She promised her catch to Madam Regard, and accordingly was filled with disappointment on returning to fish, for during her absence, a big old gar had risen to the margin and eaten the whole catch, save their heads, still attached to the string. But my cats love the gar's leavings, and while Madam Regard had to substitute oysters for fish, the feline section practiced true Catholicism for one Friday at least.

After dinner, we dropped by Clemence's to chat for a little and to fill out particulars regarding the birth of Mary Frances' baby, which I shall mail on the morrow to Dr. Knipmayer, to conform to requirements. I chatted a bit with Mary Frances who, of course, is still in bed. Mrs. McInnes was enchanted with Clemence's paintings, and for coloring, balance and sheer feeling, found them as delightful primitif paintings as anything she has run across.

3200

I was so glad Clemence was pleased and that she presented the lady with a very pretty composition. It was nice, too, that Mrs. McInnes returned the compliment by giving Clemence a token of appreciation in the form of engraved paper by Uncle Sam's mint. And so everybody was delighted all the way 'round, and I thereupon directed Mrs. McInnes straight to Little River, where she, of course, saw a picture at every turn, where little Miss Alberta had somewhat muleishly declared before no pictures existed, and we terminated our jaunt at St. Mary's on the Bayou. We stopped long enough for a water color to be made there with the artist intent on her handiwork while I indulged in elaborate conversation with an old darkie who was armed with a shot gun, being a deserter from the cotton patch, bent on getting himself a squirrel or two for his supper. We arrived at St. Mary's about two minutes before he did, and in that respect our timing was bad for the old man, for as we got out of the car, a big old fox got up leisurely from a little knoll at the end of the bridge and quite unhurriedly trotted off through the undergrowth along the river bank.

Mrs. McInnes offered me the watercolor when we reached home about 3, and I should have loved it, but I declined, feeling that a view of the place through this medium should go back home with her for she obviously found the setting delightful and it does seem to me an artist sometime ought to have the right to retain a souvenir of his own handiwork.

The gin ran until first dark, whereupon Mr. Brew and Peter knocked at my door. I had asked them to bring some men with them to help in moving something for me, but they undertook the job by themselves and accomplished it with dexterity.

On the upper floor of the African House an elegant old bookcase had stood for years, an heirloom of the early mulatto nobility. The Madam, hearing me express admiration for its simplicity some time ago, said I might have it if it really pleased me. Thus has come another original old piece to this house, destined eventually for la maison de la Reine.

I suppose it is about 10 feet high, and is of cypress, fashioned by some forgotten negro carpenter in early slavery times on Cane River. The whole front, from top to bottom and side to side, is made up of two doors, each door containing fourteen panes of glass, about a foot square, perhaps 18 inches square, the two doors comprising 28 pieces.

Eventually I shall rub it down with hot linseed oil and then wax it, and I believe it will be grand in its simplicity. I shall also retain the 1784 edition of the Encyclopaedia of some 20 odd volumes each volume perhaps a foot square and a couple of inches thick. The edition seems to go perfectly with the age the mulatto nobility flowered and in harmony with the plans envision for the habitations on Arenbourg. But I must break off and fold up, and happy withal, for is there anything more redolent than planning these little monuments along the road for a mutual tomorrow....

3201

Sunday, October 3rd, 1948.

Memorandum:

"I'm sick now" -- that is the standard phrase the Madam and I employ when something we aren't too enthusiastic lies ahead of us. I guess the phrase is used in quoting from an old tale wherein someone, to get out of doing something, remarks he is going to be ill, and the second person anticipates him by remarking he is already passing out.

The contrast between little Miss Alberta and Mrs. McInnes, in personality and ability to adjust themselves nicely to existing conditions, as opposed to the General, and particularly his wife, is ever so striking. And somehow the place is always under tension when Baton Rouge arrives. Madam General is something of a "Adam Egon", and she appears able to think up things for the servants to do that somehow puts a strain on everybody in consequence. A case in point is the fact that Aurellia thoroughly cleaned the room they were to occupy on Friday night, scrubbing the floor mightily and putting everything to rights. And the, bright and early on Saturday morning, Aurellia had to drop everything her usual routine called for because Madam General simply had to have the floor mopped a-fresh and such like.

It was a great pleasure to see the General. He told me he admires "resident Stokes of L. S. U., and has spent considerable time with him of late, planning how scientists from the General's organization can lecture to advance scientific classes in the college in such a way as to preserve basic secrets of the industry and still impart the knowledge to the graduate students. He says Dr. Stokes will fly out of L. S. U. at the moment the politicians, like Gov. Long, try to put their fingers in the education pie.

You may have read the Gov. Long had the Legislature do away with Civil Service in the State. The General told me he gave a job just fired from a State job last week. The man was a purchasing agent and refused to buy a very inferior grade of coffee at an exorbitant price from a salesman, hand in glove with the Long machine. He was immediately fired, of course, but I am glad that his new job is more lucrative than his old one, but that will not be the case of many a civil servant who will be thrown out by this bunch of rascals.

Mrs. Kinsey and McInnes took off bright and early on Saturday morning, bright and early for little Miss Alberta, and I did not see them. Little Miss A. wanted to ride to Shreveport, and then take the train back to "atchioches, spend the night in the hotel, and then take a bus to "ew Orleans. Anything she does is alright...

1032

3202

We were 8 or 10 for dinner at Celeste's, with rather dull talk but marvelous food, and afterward the S. G. Henrys returned to Baton Rouge.

On the pilgrim list for the day were Mary Dagget Lake of Fort Worth, and Mr. and Mrs. Wright from the same place, and I liked the Wrights who were new, and Mrs. Ladke, an old friend, is always good to see. She has developed a problem in trying to do a book on a prominent ante bellum Texan, a man who did much in developing the political and economic life of the Lone Star State. In the 1840's, when Southern planters were establishing plantations in Texas, this man bought a beautiful girl slave from a passing planter. The girl eventually bore him two children, and took over the management of his plantation household. They, of course, were never married, nor had the man ever married, before or after the purchase of the slave. Texas reveres the man so much that a biography is in order, and yet with racial prejudice what it is, to tell his story would probably create a furor, and leaving out the slave and the two children whom the man adored, would be omitting one of the most important parts of his life, which, in fine, is Mrs. Lake's problem, whether to tell all or to give up the idea entirely. Of course she might always give the manuscript to Mr. Lane.

It seems that one of the daughters of this household is still living, and at 93 is still hale and hearty. I asked Mrs. Lake to bring her to Melrose sometime, and she says she thinks she can do it very nicely. It would certainly be a privilege to talk with the lady and she might find Melrose interesting.

The hands were at their camp this afternoon, and they asked me for supper, but our schedule was behind tonight, so that when I arrived, Mr. and Mrs. Lane had already departed, - it was first dark, - but I did chat a while with the boys and their wives.

Did I mention I am reading an interesting book, *Men Who Have Walked With God*. Well, anyhow, I have been fascinated by a couple of chapters on Brother Laurens of 17th century France and Jacob Boehme of 16th century Germany. I know not how to spell Boehme, but it sounds like that, and he dwelt in Eastern Germany in a town that sounds like Goelitz. A shoe maker or cobbler by trade and an interesting personality, he had the misfortune to live at a time when Germany was in such an uproar that people of a peaceful turn seem to have been pretty much skipped over by historians.

And by the way, you will notice I'm back on my old typewriter, the ribbon on my other having to be renewed before I hit it much more. It was so kind of you to mention the differences in the keyboard of the Royal. Isn't it odd that the regular "n" should be in the usual place but the capital moved over to the semi colon department. There doesn't seem to be any reason for this, since there is nothing along with the little "n" that would rule out the other. Yours is a kindness that helps me so much in getting things straight, and your reference to such particulars makes me ever so grateful.....

3203

Monday, October 4th, 1948.

Memorandum:

I'm crying for the moon, but in reality would probably compromise for one good sized glow worm if one would only disentangle itself from the bamboo hedge and fly over this way to perch on my shoulder.

What I mean to say is that I am writing in the dark, not because the electric current has failed, but, oddly enough, because we have an embarrassment of too vast a store of it.

Around about 4:30, just as the Madam was folding up, the current failed at the store, but surged in in vast volume every where else. Every time a bulb would be connected, an atomic glare would flash mightily, pop, and extinguish itself. Her radio did the same thing, and every electrical gadget, including the ice box, followed suit. I'm certainly glad I discovered this phenomenon when my reading machine was not turned on.

But there is always some minor advantage to be discovered in such inconveniences, and out of this one I pull the advantage of being able to let my head nod occasionally without its being noticed by Mr. Bachelier who came home with me after supper in the big house. We hadn't been separated but a scant 15 minutes since his arrival this morning at 9, and he has just now folded up his beard.

All this gives you some concept of my momentary situation.

Your grand letter came in today's post. It was grand of you to toss it off under such pressure of affairs, but I urge you not to force yourself to such undertakings when your immediate surroundings are not conducive to such matters.

Your jaunt to Bloomingdale's in the tain was noble, but scarcely meriting the inconvenience involved, - merely to say Hail and Farewell to the Toledo number. But the information dished out by Himalaya was enlightening. Perhaps that explains why Nadine passed out of our picture, for I believe some people naturally tend to cut off former acquaintances associated with a particular being when the latter proves a hopeless disappointment. In some case, I think, the bereaved one finds solace in contacts with those who sensed the former happiness associated with the beloved one, while in other cases, the former associates only tend to recall the lamented past, and thereby serve merely as little thornes in one's heart. I suppose you and I may serve as the thorn department in this case, and accordingly, and possibly naturally, we are put out of Nadine's mind as much as possible. And to one who has lost all in love, the

8038

3204

knowledge of other people's true friendship must bring up ever so slight a feeling of envy or at least a greater sense of loss quite easily understandable. Poor, poor Madine.

Today was Madam Regard's birthday. At just the hour the electricity started carrying on, a number of parrish acquaintances came to see her. It must have been darker than Egypt in the house, for the situation of trees about the house and its wide galleries make the place shadowy at noon day. Among the cars from town I sighted the "Go-carten". The lady doctor stopped over to see Mr. Bachellier and me for a moment at 6.

What I had sensed in the last letter seems to have had some element of fact in it. The veith thing has disturbed the menage, for it seems Celeste spoke to the physician about the outrageous Hogan letter, inspired by Mr. Veith, and the wife passed the business along to her husband.

Two organizations of asked the lady doctor to address them, one organization being a Rotary Club some place or other. She says she thinks she will fashion her a dress on the light side, centering around the peculiar problems encountered by a female physician, prefacing her remarks by a statement revealing why she originally decided to take up the study of medicine which, if I understand it correctly, had its beginnings in the fact that Mary Baker Eddyism was rampant in her own home.

Of course I gladly assented when asked if I would lend an attentive ear if the speech were brought down here and run over briefly before public delivery. I have already asked that I may be given the manuscript after the oration has been delivered, feeling you might find some interest in running through it.

There are a heap of other things I would toss into the air for casual examination, but my guess is that I must be running close to the end of this page, and I am quite sure my sleepiness has easily succeeded in making this note unusually dull. I shall accordingly break off at this point, holding the thought that by tomorrow at this hour, we shall momentarily be without any guests at all for a day or two and that by getting caught up a little one my sleep, I may "hew to the line" with greater satisfaction to myself and those burdened by personal contacts.....

Barbour 9/3205

8038

Tuesday, October 5th, 1948.

Memorandum:

How odd to be alone.

And how odd it seems to some people that I should like it.

My little guest arrived this morning just after dawnin and from that point on until he returned to Little River, not a minute of loneliness or meditation intervened. I laughed to myself as I recalled that English lady's biography of the Princess des Ursins, wherein she records that the King of Spain had such a fixation on his Parma wife that he contrived they should never be separated for a second, and to effect that intention, contrived to have two "chaises" instead of one to grace the roayl bathroom, so that even during a cosmic urge on the part of one, the other might be hard by. I believe the author's name was Caldwell or some such, but I can't recall for certain, but I haven't forgotten her paragraph on the matter in question.

For the enclosure, you will note the persistence apparently pays, if pursued long enough. Of course I am enchanted to learn that your friend, Mr. Scourby, is going to make the recording of little Marcel's opus, and from here on out, I shall probably spend my days asking Mr. Barbour when the job is likely to be completed. I have already asked him in my response to this letter, but expect no response, for I have written Mr. Barbour before. Knowing nothing about the business, however, I should guess that perhaps six months might be required to get the disks on the market. As for the rendition in French, I found it splendid, and unquestionably, Mr. Scourby will do equally well. How fortunate for little Marcel, and the world, that the original English translation should have been so perfect and that both these transcriptions seem guaranteed a like excellence.

And while on the Reading Machine matter, I must refer to a fine chapter in "Men Who Have Walked with God", having to do with the life of William Blake. There was considerable space given to Blake's illustrations for Job, and, if Memory serves, the New York Times some ten years ago reproduced several of these at the time the sketches were put on exhibition at the Morgan Library which had recently acquired them. But aside from the excellence of the biographical sketch of Blake and an interpretation of his life and artistic expression, there was a lovely tonal effect running throughout the composition revolving

8058

3206

about the wonderful association between the artist and his wife, which somehow seems to be one of the grandest things one is likely to run across in the lives of any two individuals. Theirs was a hard life, forever haunted by poverty, and yet so perfect in union of two people that it rivals any other such companionship I have ever heard of.

And the word poverty suggests an estimate made by my recent guest who figures that locally the cotton and pecanes this year will probably produce about two hundred thousand dollars. According to the terms of her husband's will, the ~~adam~~ was to receive the income of the place, which, were that carried out, would of course net her quite a tidy sum this year, after all expenses had been deducted. Good crops or bad, she has always been provided with everything she asked for, but her wants always having been modest, and her imagination at present being ever so vague, this year's annual division of income for the children in control ought to be generous, I should imagine.

Sometime between 10:30 last night and daylight this morning, I somehow managed to brush up our new bookcase. I washed it thoroughly, inside and out, with warm soap suds, and daubed the 28 panes with Bon Ami which Aurellia removed later in the morning. There will have to be one or two minor repairs, such as re-enforcing one of the shelves, etc., but aside from that, the piece is in excellent condition. What delighted me enormously was to discover that the panes of glass are the original ones, inclining toward a vagrant wavy quality in places, which somehow sets a seal on its severe and elegant character.

In the absence of a ruler, I have tried to estimate the size of the piece with this sheet of paper. The width of the individual glass panes is just the length of this sheet, and the height is about half or three quarters of an inch greater than the length. The doors contain two sets of panes in with and seven panes in height.

There is something about the cypress and the quality of the workmanship suggesting the same craftsmanship in the Grandfather clock in my boudoir. And we know the clock cabinet was made by some forgotten negro blacksmith slave, owned by the Metoyer noblesse about 1810.

Somehow I like the piece the more because whenever I glance at it, I feel assured that eventually it will grace the maison de la reine, and is therefore twice as precious already.

But the hour comes for me to fold, which is probably just as well or I might orate at such length as to give the impression that this item is of greater merit than many might feel, and so I shall break off herewith, and in folding, picture the eventual setting wherein the bookcase will serve one who will enjoy it as much as I.....

3207

Robina 10/4
Rudolph 10/4

8058

Wednesday, October 6th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Much mail for the ~~adam~~ today, but nothing particularly of interest.

Mrs. McInnes wrote that after she and little Miss A. called on Sater Saturday afternoon, Miss Alberta didn't feel so well and so rested all day Sunday, but determinedly got up early Monday to head out for New Orleans in order to vote there on Tuesday. It seems by subsequent radio reports that her pet candidate won, and the whole city went overwhelmingly anti Long in its selection of minor officials.

The enclosures aren't especially interesting but they provide a couple of side glances as to how things are turning in one quarter or another. I hadn't expected Dr. Miller to resign before the end of the year, but I can't say how I hit on that particular date. It will be interesting to learn if she plans to head down this way for a little visit. Should she decide to do so, I am under the impression her stay might be brief, conditions generally have altered so appreciably since the hot summer's day she headed out from here with me for Natchez where before she knew it, she became Secretary of the Natchez Garden Club. The Congo, the Yellow Sea, Maine River, the Mississippi and the Palisades, --what a business.

From medical and social quarters I have lately been given to understand that the consensus of opinion has it that la Trignan is inclining too heavily in the direction of both alcohol and morphine, which really represents quite a heady brew, come to think of it, either separately or mixed. To such a cocktail, one needs but add a touch of a slightly disordered mind, and the eventual results ought to be devastating, I should imagine. On occasion I have felt people were fortunate having a physician in the family, but I am not quite so sure it is a blessing, and particularly if the physician is under the complete domination of an erratic wife.

Today my patient was both feverish and peevish. But thanks to the unusual warmth of October, plus an ocean of sunshine permeating half the front gallery, I arranged a couple of hours' sitting in the open, which was beneficial not only for the sunbathing the lower half of her person, but for the exercise afforded by getting in and out of the house. Two of her best servants were in tears during the morning, and one toyed with the idea of going home, but a pep talk and a glass of wine both washed away the tears and persuaded them to remain at their posts, and tomorrow, of course, will be another day.

3208

The highway department took a great spurt to effect its construction work in this area today. Yesterday Melrose had undertaken the demolition of all that remains of the old garage, and had the building about half down when the big old tractors and other contraptions, looking more like Diplodocus than anything I can think of, suddenly began building the new gravel road slap under some of the remaining timbers still jutting out from the sagging roof above. The road seemed pretty nearly finished by first dark and from the sounds drifting in from the bridge, the final operations on that span must have started. It will require 60 days to finish that job, I am told, and then everything will be clear sailing from Melrose to the cement at Montrose, and half the current excitement of the past six months in this neighborhood ought to evaporate, I hope.

What with all the doings of the past week, I am so far behind in my radio listening that I reckon I'll never quite get caught up. Sometime Tuesday night or possibly Monday, I was half asleep when some announcement in the news broadcast indicated that Fred Allen is neither back or is about to open his current season. I shall shop around a little this Sunday night, assuming he will be in about the same brackets for time and station as last year. I can't hardly resist my Reading Machine before folding up my beard, and once I get entangled in that, - the Reading Machine and not my beard, I usually stick with it until I am so sleepy the radio fails to register when I eventually get around to it.

Picture my enchantment this morning at first dawn when on arriving at Arenbourg, I noticed a big old long legged blue heron, perched on one leg, surveying the surface of Main River from the terrace. Perhaps he wasn't really surveying the surface of the river but was merely dreaming of his breakfast in that general direction, for he seemed not at all surprised by my arrival, and with the greatest leisure pondered the situation and with the greatest indifference, apparently, he let down the other leg and, after due consideration, ponderously flapped off toward Celine's house on the opposite shore.

Perhaps he is the guilty party who played a trick on me the other day. I had tied some white strips of cloth on some tiny persimmons I want to move in November, realizing that when the leaves are shed, I shall recognize the persimmons the more readily if marked now. But some feathered friend must have needed these little old strips for some exploit or other for next day half of them had been pulled off. Frankly, I suspect my old friend, the Mocking bird, who is forever getting into my twine to make ducks and drakes of my fine geometric designs set off in white string. It seems an odd time for any bird to be needing materials to solve their housing problems, but it is possible that old Mr. Blue Beard or the Mocking bird are like the crow in lifting whatever attracts their eye, whether it be of the slightest service or not. I'm using safety pins to designate things next, and the marauders will find it more difficult to filch them, I think.....

3209

Thursday, October 2nd, 1948.

Memorandum:

And so what with all the bits of correspondence to be cleared from my desk this morning before mail time, I returned early from Arenbourg and started in.

But I didn't get far.

First Peter tapped on my window about 6:45. He had hurt his finger at the gin and hoped I could bandage it for him. I could.

And then I started in again at letters, but stopped about 7:30 to answer a knock on my door.

It was Carolyn Ramsey, of all people, and at such a curious hour.

She drove from Morgan City, La. to Alexandria last night, and then headed out early this morning to drop by here for a few minutes.

She is heading out from Marshall in a day or two, with Iowa and North and South Dakota on her list, to be properly photographed, if possible, before the snowbanks pile to high, after which she heads for California, with San Francisco her headquarters until February, when she expects to head back this way. After the Dakota business is wrapped up, Louisiana and Texas will be hers definitely, with possibly Mississippi and Alabama thrown in for good measure.

Except for the African House, which was in a particularly interesting light, both for black and white and for color, she took no other pictures.

She suggests doing some ^{articles} times for the Saturday Evening Post. I recommended one article on Melrose and one article on the Cane River country. She liked that idea. I shall turn the matter over in my mind, and probably bear down on your good nature much between now and February, thinking out loud. At the moment it would seem that Melrose might be based on two main threads or would foundations sound better, one dealing with Melrose and its flowering under the mulattoes, and second, its re-flowering under the Madam, with contrasts and comparisons as between the economic and cultural developments under the Metoyer and the Henry influence. But I am already beginning to think aloud, and it is premature.

Carolyn showed me a magazine being circulated world wide by the State Department. This particular one was in Russian in text, but all American in pictures. It is designed for circulation where ever possible where Russian is the native tongue, which might require some drilling into the Iron Curtain to get them through, I should imagine.

COSE

3210

Later, probably next spring, she hopes to start recording photographically the story of cotton for this publication which looks much like Life, and I showed her about the gin and some of the cotton fields, to indicate how nicely the cotton fields, the picking and the ginning could all be summed up in pictures on Melrose, thanks to the fact that cotton practically grows in the Melrose gin, which isn't the case on most plantations where, if there be a gin, it is usually so situated on the highway as to rule out such a summation as suggested above.

J. M. will love the idea of using Melrose to tell the story of cotton, and particularly when I tell him the publications appear in dozens of languages and are scattered broadside over the globe. But whether cotton appears within the year or not, I think I shall ask Carolyn to get us a complete set of a single issue in all the languages that they are brought out in, for I should imagine such a file, - of a single issue, should be ever so interesting in itself and later as an example and commentary of American propaganda as of the mid 19th or rather the mid 20th century.

After calling on the Madam, getting the shots of the African House and taking a glimpse at the cotton picking and ginning, and their intimate relationship, it was time for her to take off. I was sorry that Dr. Knipmayer came along just then, for there were a few odds and ends I wanted to discuss regarding the Melrose and Matchitoches or Cane River articles, and how the illustrations could best fit, but all that can be gone into at a later season.

I reckon the State Department must furnish transportation, which in this instance is a fine enclosed Ford truck, bearing an imposing seal of the State Department on the doors. A ladder is contrived to fit on the outside of the truck, not to be used in fighting fires but in climbing to elevated situations in taking pictures, and the inside of the thing has much compact arrangement, including an ice box, I believe, although I can't be certain on that point, for there were too many things to take in during such limited time.

And so the lady took off and we shall see her in February or some other time, and I'm glad she passed this way, and perhaps something pleasant may come of it all the way 'round.

I chatted with Dr. Knipmayer but briefly. He told me Jack Marcel's wife had died, according to the death certificate submitted to him for signature of "Causes unknown", which is just as good as any for starvation, I guess.

Just before folding up last night, I read a lovely line, which should be chistled over some museum or other:

"Art is a means to converse with Paradise". The words are William Blake's, but I think they are nice, and surely Paradise seems so much nearer when any manifestation of Art makes itself felt in our hearts.....

SISE

Nina
10/7/48 3211

Friday, October 8th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Lyle always used to say that Miss Leudivine was one of the most aristocratic old ladies he ever knew.

She didn't always approve of her daughter, Cammie's doings, and once when the latter asked her if she really wasn't sweetening her coffee more than she really should, Miss Leudivine brought her offspring up sharp by remarking:

"I'll have you remember I am a sugar planter's daughter. Naturally I prefer sweets more than the wife of a cotton planter."

Miss Leudivine was a practical soul, too and altogether industrious up unto the end. On her 93rd birthday she sighed and speculated to her daughter:

"If I were only 75 again, just think how much work I could do!"

Long did she labor to persuade her daughter to be more systematic, but to little avail. Perhaps the way life operated on Melrose was different than on Shadey Grove.

"If you really want to get things accomplished," Miss Leudivine opined one evening, "you ought to establish a certain amount each day for the next day's stint, and then see to it that the work is actually carried out."

Her daughter agreed it would be nice to try, and together they conjured up a fat program. But came the next day and with it a dozen unexpected guests and a hundred circumstances demanding priority above all pre-conceived notions, and the day closed without not a thing accomplished which had been determined on in advance.

Thus the phrase, "If you would simply establish a stint for yourself, daughter...." became a standard joke in the succeeding years.

And today the joke was on me, for after yesterday's go round, I had figured out a heap of things I was going to carry out before today's setting of the sun, and lo! here I am, heading into the night without having taken up one of them.

3212

A flock of pilgrims, early, early, got the day headed down the wrong road. Then a telephone from Dr. and Mrs. Oberdyke that they were heading this way, and a similar message from Mr. Laughlin, asking if he could have some of my time, and so the hourglass ran out.

The Oberdykes are going ahead on their study of North Louisiana houses and Mr. Laughlin, entranced at the impression Cane River made on him, wants to do a volume like "Ghosts Along the Mississippi", which, I suppose, he might style "Ghosts along the Bayous", or some such.

He could remain but a day and concentrated primarily on the exterior of the big house, endless studies of the African House, and the rest on Dr. Miller's log cabin, which is generally accepted as being about the oldest extant in Louisiana.

He asked if he might come back later in the season and devote much time to further studies, inside and out, of the big house and of many of the out buildings, all of which seemed to delight him.

The Madam was sitting on the front gallery when Dr. and Mrs. Oberdyke arrived and when Mr. Laughlin followed, but she declined to receive anyone. Mr. Laughlin giggled in his beard when he recalled listing Mrs. Henry in his Acknowledgements in "Ghosts along the Mississippi" for his failure to meet the Madam seemed to make him realize for the first time that all his communications had been with me rather than with her.

Naturally I didn't mention little Miss Ramsey's name to the Oberdykes or to Mr. Laughlin. Naturally I am hoping that Carolyn and I, with her pictures and my text, can bust into print before the other two volumes appear, but Mr. Laughlin doesn't know the Oberdykes are doing a North Louisiana book, and neither of them, -the Oberdykes or Mr. Laughlin, that another project on the same subject is going to be set on to cook before long, I hope.

Both the Madam and Aurellia were filled with much merriment today because Aurellia found the Madam wearing two night gowns this morning, and one of them had been so wonderfully and fearfully put on that it was physically impossible to get it off without cutting it up the entire length of the seam, under circumstances presently existing, laughter is a most desirable element that I rejoice at the mutual reaction, but I must say I think it is ever so daring that the lady should be so much alone during the night when she can contrive such extraordinary combinations.

I still think the line I quoted last night from Blake a good one: "Art is a means of conversing with Paradise"

3213

Sunday, October 10th, 1948.

Memorandum:

How nice to have your Wednesday letter in Saturday's post.

I sincerely appreciate your thoughtfulness in giving me so many interesting particulars covering such a wide range of subjects, none of which I had heard about until your letter came.

It would appear the Archduke Otto gets around like a breeze, perhaps on his next go-round in this region, he will have better luck in his attempt to make the Cane River region.

I had heard nothing about the impending celebration of the 2,000th anniversary of the city of Paris. As suggested in your letter, this ought to provide an excellent occasion for illustration to do a big number. Your reference to Ile de la Cite somehow recalls to mind the Left Bank environs of that neighborhood and the remarkably preserved mosaic floors of the Roman baths which are still preserved as part of the pavement in the Musee de Cluny. It's curious what odd things one discovers in his mind when mentally listing the particular objects and places one would like to have a go at again. These fragments of the lovely old mosaic floors is one thing on my list.

In the radio department, I have sampled all stations at the hour invitation to learning is being broadcast, only to find that nothing within reach, during daylight hours, is available for my delectation.

I should have liked to hear today's discussion of the Journal of Eugene Delacroix. I have only glanced at snatches of it, but found every morsel to my liking that I chanced upon. I have so long been out of touch with people interested in 18th and 19th century personalities that many thoughts, theories and particulars about them have grown dusty in my own mind. If I am not too wrong, Delacroix was the son of the Duke de Talleyrand, a fact which few people in his own day or in subsequent decades realize. Perhaps this point will be brought out, in general discussion, if today's Invitation touched upon the point, speculating upon the possibility that Delacroix's unique mind came directly from his father, assuming that heredity does contribute something to mental equipment.

I laughed to myself, for I hadn't thought of the suggestion before regarding your keen perception brought up by frequency modulation. Our local station is Alexandria K A L B and K A L P M, and from here on out I shall laugh every time I hear it, my thoughts turning north eastward.

6138

3214

And just one more reference to the radio. I heard the first half of Mr. Columbus discovering American on the U. B. S. program, with only one element that seemed out of joint to me. Ostensibly, the program opened in a London broadcast of October 14th, 1492, with much speculation as to how Columbus was doing on his westward trip. My guess is that London knew nothing about the expedition and would have cared less since only Spain and Portugal were dabbling in western adventures in those days. But that is merely a point.

On the domestic side, things were busy enough here this week end. The Wenks came in full force on Saturday afternoon, Sister with a barking cough, being a hold over from a cold that has been making the Shreveport rounds. I hope she took all her germs back with her when she left this afternoon about 2, for the Adam is scarcely in a condition to contend with a cold.

After the Wenks had left Dr. Eleanor came by, bringing Dr. Sarah Calpp with her and a Mrs. Witwell, wife of a College professor in town, the Witwells being recently returned from the Philippines where they were engaged in educational pursuits before the recent cataclysm.

The lady doctor merely brought the ladies in, for she had to fly on to Puny's house, for, as I just learned from her, he is critically ill with pneumonia, complicated by asthma.

I bounced the Divine Sarah on the Madam's lap while I took la Witwell to my house, where later the lady doctor and the Divine Sarah repaired prior to their departure for town.

Then came the Scotts of New York who are business with a big B., and have been here before. They are just back from England and had much to tell about the difficulties of rationing, etc., in the British Isles.

And so darkness came down on us before the last guests had departed.

I am sorry, what with a somewhat prolonged supper, it was too late for me to make a round to see how Puny is making it. He certainly ought to have a fighting chance if physicians count, what with Dr. Worsley on week days and Dr. Rand on his times off. I take it the Wands probably weren't here today.

All in all, it was a pretty no-account day, but although meager, there is an element of recompense tonight for Arenbourg and "us-es", what with a pin point sprinkle curtaining the neighborhood, and somewhere between here and San Antonio, whence came my Fred Allen program, an atmospheric cannonade seems to be going full blast. Let's hope the big guns eventually get trained in this direction, with an accompanying deluge. And next Sunday may be it will be clear so we can all hear little Miss Bankhead who ought to be hilarious, -- and so goodnight.....

6138

3215

Monday, October 11th, 1948.

Memorandum:

It was Eleven this morning before Aurellia came by to see me.

Obviously upset, tears welled up in her eyes and sometimes spilled down her cheeks, but she didn't sob.

"Mama was awful sick this morning," she explained. "I took her to town to see the lady doctor. She say Mama's awful sick and must have an operation. The lady doctor was awful nice to Mama and me. When she got through lookin' at Mama and we was ready to go, I ask the lady doctor how much I owe her. And the lady doctor say: 'It ain't what you owe me, child, it's what I owes you'."

"And I looks at her, 'cause I couldn't understand it look like, and the lady doctor, she say: 'Listen child, I seen how good you was to Bessie when she was going to have a baby and didn't have nobody else to look after her, and I seen how kind you always is to your mama. And I knows how good you is to Miss Henry. And you done learned me a heap on how good people is, and child', she say 'you don't owe me nothin' for bringin' your Mama way up here to see me. And I'm giving you a slip that will let her enter the Alexandria hospital today, and you takes her there and I'll see they do all they can for her'."

How marvelous is life when even a solitary petal of some celestial rose drops down to earth from Paradise.

On Puny's behalf, I telephoned the lady doctor last this afternoon. I dropped by to see him last night, for the rain never did get to going enough to bog me down, and I passed by again this afternoon. He wanted to inquire about some medicine. He is obviously better, and according to the physician's recommendation, I substituted some wine for the pills he had been taking.

I inquired about Aurellia's mother and learned that she apparently has a ruptured intestinal difficulty which appears very serious. It is good to know she is in the hospital.

And then, Mr. Eleanor asked my opinion on a matter. She said that in her slight contact with the Madam yesterday, she got the impression she was steadily weakening from a cause which she felt she could correct. Since Dr. Wenk the same morning had given the Madam a going over and found her just fine, Mr. Eleanor felt hesitant about injecting herself into a case to which she had not been summoned, and yet

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her natural human instinct impelled her to ask someone's advice on the human and ethical aspects of the situation. She said she couldn't think of making an advance without J. H.'s approval. I assured her that that would be readily forthcoming, and that I would prepare the Madam for a casual visit from the lady doctor from time to time, by lying to her in saying that yesterday I had recommended to her that whenever she made the long drive down this way to call on patients, the Madam would feel ever so happy if she would stop off for a few moments and chat with her. Five minutes after I had hung up, J. H. had approved the medical angle and hastened on to advise me I ought to do something in a casual fashion to prepare the Madam for more or less frequent calls. Of course that had already been accomplished, and may the Madam's new physician have better luck than her former one. One thing is certain, the results can't be more disappointing.

And on top of all this talk about Dr. Eleanor, here we are on the birthday of another Eleanor, for my radio this morning announced it is Mrs. F. D. R.'s birthday. The calendar has it that she is 64 but to me she is one of those people on whom the calendar makes no imprint. I suppose it doesn't happen frequently that a single family is possessed of two members whose ages seem of no interest at all, and yet I must say that never in my life did I think of F. D. R. in reference to his age so that when I heard a splendid eulogy of the dead President I was a little started to note that I found the mention of the number of years he had lived almost trivial and inconsequential.

Let's hope Madame Eleanor's was a happy birthday this year, for even though she is far from home and kin, Paris, as we know, is ever so familiar to her and where ever she is, in that place there are bound to be warm friends.

And speaking of Paris, I hear a great deal these days about the United Nations sessions being held in the Palais de Chaillot. I saw an airplane picture of the place, and not very clearly, but somehow the setting suggested the emplacement of the old Trocadero under whose arches a million years ago I used to meet the boy friend at sunrise, from whence we would scuttle across the gardens and the Seine beyond to catch the first morning train at the Cinq Mars station to get out to Trianon before breakfast. Some commentator referred to the Palais de Chaillot as being situated at Passy the other day, but in the 17th and 18th centuries Passy was one place and Chaillot another, and I'm so mixed up by the droned thing I don't know where I'm at. It doesn't matter a particle, however, if the Trocadero and the Chaillot building are identical, so far as the place they both have occupied, but just in case you should notice anything in reference to the matter, I should be glad to be enlightened.

And now I must go, for it's dark and I must take my "medecine". Somehow I hope God especially blessed the two Eleanors and Lydia. If you only knew how mightily he blesses me through Lydia's star studded crown, an unfailing radiance lighting my footsteps through the night.....

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Ida Hazarell 10/9
R.D. 10/9 3217

Tuesday, October 12th, 1948.

Memorandum:

How nice to have your grand letter in today's post.

And speaking of the post, I might remark that in-coming letters are likely to require an extra day for delivery henceforth. The T. and P. Railroad schedule has been so altered that the trains bearing first class mail do not arrive until after the departure of the postman, which means a 24 hour delay in delivery, of course. This arrangement is temporary but I hope it is retained, for if the postman waits for the train, he will not reach Melrose until dark, which in the present set up would mean the mail wouldn't be gone into until the next day anyway. And as for out-going mail, I should prefer to mail it on the postman's morning arrival rather than awaiting his advent after supper. I mention this delivery delay so that you may not be surprised to note on occasion that I sometimes acknowledge receipt of your communications rather later than formerly.

And thanks for sending me the clipping, announcing the new volume on Mrs. Jefferson Davis. The illustration looks like the one I forwarded you, as printed in an article in the Picayune.

It was good of you to quote from the volume about Mrs. Davis in girlhood, with the quotations from the Natchez ladies, - the ladies probably actually being one la Moore. The account of the broom causing the fire destroying Mrs. Davis' grandfather's home probably came from old Mr. Alexander Postlethwaite, who died in his 90's a number of years ago. He told it to me, as coming directly from the grandfather's descendants, when he and I made a little pilgrimage together to inspect the old ruins of the home which, when last I was in Natchez, were still standing, or rather still crumbling. I naturally used the story when la Moore and I were working on our Natchez volume, and that may account for its spread in other quarters. It is interesting how an item of this type can turn up in such unexpected and such varying quarters.

Of the enclosures, they speak for themselves, but of them, I would make a remark concerning a single paragraph in each: to wit,

I am glad to know that Dr. Miller is fixing to head Southward, but I am vastly puzzled that she should have failed to advise Melrose of her intentions, if those intentions include coming here for a stay. Her cabin is not precisely in the condition it was when she left and without some preparation, - details of plumbing, heating, etc., it could scarcely be occupied until such details had been taken care of. Of course, she could always stay in the big house, but I doubt

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she would be over enthusiastic about that. I take it another lady mentioned in the letter, Miss Lillian, didn't like it too much, and I believe Dr. Miller is even more fond of being alone when day is done, - and possibly in between times.

From the other enclosure, I take it that Charles must remain quite incapacitated, and probably quite ill. Ida should have had better sense in writing the Madam to ask about Sister's house warming and a projected marriage on Dan's part. I didn't know that Dan was fixing to get married and doubt if he is, and the house warming is about the recent party, of course, but Ida's mention of it indicates or seems to, at least, that it has been a subject of discussion in my letters to poor Charles who obviously can't write for himself. I had better dash off notes with less abandon when an assistant is going to make the responses. Since all letters from Melrose have been under my hand, it would have almost seemed as though the response might have been addressed to me, and particularly as the clippings mentioned for the Madam appear to have been mislaid or something, for all that arrived were scraps bearing advertisements, stock quotations and the like, which was pretty hilarious when the Madam attempted digesting them.

The lady doctor called on the Madam today and had quite a sitting with her. I saw her when she left and she told me she was under the impression she could do a few things for her. She laughingly said she had been somewhat taken aback when she encountered an iron curtain in the form of a corset, on attempting to use a stethoscope, not realizing her prospective patient wore one. Her opinion is that the brain arteries are tending to harden and she feels this situation may be relieved, although she is not at all certain.

On seeing the Madam later, she told me the lady doctor had been to see her and that she had a feeling she might have some success in accepting her as a physician, -- "but for heavens sake, let's not tell the Wenks, for they don't need to know anything about it." Amen, Sister.

Something tells me that sooner or later, and I suppose if it can be arranged, it might as well be sooner, I shall have to have some bridgework attended to. I mention this in case there should be a skip of a day or so in the regularity of my communications, so that you will understand. I may put off the business until later, depending upon various circumstances, but if possible, I shall attempt attending to the matter within the next three or four weeks.

I shall be thinking of your particularly on Sunday nights when you will be attending the theatre. Some of the titles you mention are unknown to me, but being sponsored by the organization they are, I have no doubt their excellence is assured. I smiled when you mentioned a preference for Saturday over Sunday night for such outings, and musing, as in the past:--In New York it is always a struggle to get out of doing things, whereas in some other places you can sometimes consider what you may choose to do, and this seems a case in point....

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Alberta Kinney
10/11/48
Bachelor 10/10

Wednesday, October 13th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Marvelous weather and the roads so teeming with gravel trucks and mechanical dinosaurs that pilgrims couldn't get here very conveniently if they wanted to, and perhaps they didn't.

At Arenbourg we appear to be centered between the Alphonse-Alfred feud which blazed again today. For today incorporation papers for the Cotton Social Club were signed, establishing a new club to the north of us while Alphonse's club to the south of us continues to function. Preverse as human beings are, Alphonse, after announcing his decision to close the Melrose Social Club, suddenly reversed his intention immediately on learning that the Cotton Social Club would get under way to make Saturday nights the gayer for the younger blades in this area. I'm glad a "poor man's club" is now assured, for that is the important thing, and not the fulminations of the opposing neighbors.

Somehow I had rather expected the Rands today but I didn't see any of them around 2 o'clock when I passed their camp on an errand across the bridge. I took the opportunity to drop in on Furry and found him ever so much better. Passing out yesterday, he was on the point of leaving his bed and putting himself on his gallery today, but I advised against such strident attempts at recuperation. Perhaps he felt the gayer because his doctor bills thus far had been much less than he had anticipated. Usually doctors from town charge \$20.00 or \$25.00 per visit, plus extras for medicine, etc. In his present illness his doctor has visited him three times and given him much medicine and three shots and charged him \$36.00. It's heartening to know that the professional lamp hasn't been completely extinguished by the mad rush of the business men, bent on getting rich quick, under the guise of practicing medicine.

Sometimes it seems to me the radio news broadcasts are too weighted down with particulars about what is going to happen, and to such a extent one discovers at the conclusion of the piece, one has heard practically nothing about what actually has taken place.

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With this in mind, I am so bold as to lay hold of the same pattern by announcing something that will not happen here. Last week Dr. Knipmayer asked if he might bring the head of the Rapides Parish Health Department to call on me. Both doctors were scheduled to dine at Magnolia, as they have several times on Thursday during the past year. It seems Dr. Lamky must have had someone in Alexandria recommend me to him as a possible aid in straightening out some of his problems in his research on Louisiana History, for Dr. Knipmayer remarked that Dr. L. would be enchanted to cut his dinner short at Magnolia if he might spend a little time with me at Melrose.

But tonight's radio, - K A L B, - A M and P M, reported that Dr. Lambkey was killed in an automobile accident this afternoon when returning to Alexandria from South Louisiana. A cattle truck swirled into the car the doctor was driving, killing him instantly but not injuring the three other occupants of the car seriously. I never knew him, although I have heard his name mentioned often and Mrs. Rand has often spoken of his unusually charming wife, a European, I believe, but I can't recall if she came from France or Germany.

I feel like a heel to mention the fact that I am casting about for 3 yards of some yellow figured material with a view to giving it to Aurellia for her Christmas. When I realize all the demands upon your time and good nature, this really seems an imposition. It occurs to me, however, that should you be sailing through Boomingdale's or some such place as sight so a cotton print with some yellow in it, the order might be given with the request that the item be sent C. O. D. to me, and thereby save you all the excitement of having to make the purchase and then bother with the posting of the same. So many things come to the local post office C. O. D. I assume any store may forward orders in that fashion, although I am not certain on that point. I wince as I mention this burden and yet your unfailing kindness in shopping for me in times gone by, somehow gives me the courage to try imposing on you again. In the event, however, that the material will not be sent C. O. D., any time between now and Christmas, and the store refuse to send the thing you select, so that you will be otherwise involved, just indicate their contrariness and I shall pass the job over to Celeste who would love to do it but would make such a vast to-do about it that I would end up by thinking I was purchasing the year's output of McBratney Linens.

And speaking of Aurellia, she must be remaining with her mother in the Alexandria hospital, which, I take it, is good news, since it appeared the stricken one would either pass out almost immediately or get well.

I can't understand how it is that Mr. Bachellier didn't know about the Pope's living at Vagnon when I was chatting with him on that subject last week. From the enclosure, however, you will note he has brushed up considerably on that point. It certainly is a sight, - the range of stuff we cover when he honors us with a sitting.....

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October 14th, (Thursday), 1948.

Memorandum:

The death of Richard Dana was the most striking news item coming to hand today.

He received quite a bit of space in the Picayune on October 11th, but our newspapers are sometimes slow in arriving, and when they do get hither, they frequently go unread.

I am glad to cite this event, however, as an excellent example of what I mean when I deplore the meager regional news one gets from the radio. K A L B - and shall I add F M' devotes 7 minutes to regional news and 7 minutes to Taylor Grant on the American Broadcasting System, but I seldom hear anything beyond the fact that a flock of Kiwanis or Rotary Club members are going to get together for a cham bake.

No one can deny that the Coat Castle Murder mystery was one of the most celebrated in the history of America, and the fact that it still remains unsolved, ought to make the death of "Dick" Dana of general interest, for after all, Mr. Dana was the only man ever indicted for the crime. But not a peep have I heard over the air waves concerning the matter.

One of the newspaper accounts of Mr. Dana's death, referred to a Court action taking place in Natchez on December 1st, 1941. I don't know if you have Memoranda covering that period. For me, it was altogether an extraordinary week, and I shall always remember the various circumstances with mixed emotions. I attended the Court mentioned above, and chatted with Mr. Dana and Miss Kockery that day. The Swans, having burned Homewood, were also in town for the hilarious insurance trial and I dined with them at the hotel. I was at Laurel Hill the same week, and after a search of years, I discovered a portrait of an estimable lady of Church Hill, and one of her friends, still living, which meant much to me.

On Saturday I returned from the country and went to Church on Sunday mornig, accepting an invitation to take tea with one of the Dunbar ladies who wanted to show me some of the family portraits and family papers in her home. It was a delightful afternoon and was dark before I left.

I was supposed to dine with Mrs. Moore's daughter, but stopped in to see Miss Nellie before going on to dinner. I recall how Mrs. Brandon greeted me, and how odd it seemed that she should first off remark if I didn't think those Japs were terrible. Frankly I hadn't thought too much about them during the past week, wha

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with so many ante bellum and contemporary aspects of Natchez on my mind, and it was a quarter of an hour after chatting with Miss Nellie that it dawned on me that the Japs had been up to something unusual. I was accordingly as floored when at long last she asked me if I hadn't heard that Pearl Harbor had been blasted.

I guess Miss Nellie and the rest of America had known all about the business since noon of that day, but it wasn't until well after 7 o'clock on December 7th, 1941 that I finally got the Spanish moss out of my perruque.

Well, word, this is certainly a far piece from where I began, although perhaps psychologists could somehow contrive to tie in the Goat Castle murder with Pearl Harbor, but I wouldn't try. Having chatted many a time at Goat Castle with both Mr. Dana and Miss Dockery, and having known old Duncan Minor and his sister, Miss Jeanne of Oakland, so well, and having enjoyed the confidence of Sheriff Connor and others connected with the case, I suppose I may perhaps be more interested in the matter, and in Mr. Dana's passing, than some people. One thing is certain, Mr. Dana had nothing to do with the killing of Jane Surget Merrill. But my chief interest in Mr. Dana was not in his personality but rather in the hope that through acquaintance with his personality I might the better envision some of the physical attributes and perhaps a measure of the personality of his remarkable brother whose remarkable disappearing act from Natchez always intrigued me much more than anything "Dick" was ever mixed up in. I think I have mentioned the strange story of his brother in previous Memoranda, and a study of that man offers something of the greatest interest to me. Had I not experienced a decade of comparative remoteness from the main routes of travel, I perhaps would not have been so sympathetic toward Mr. Dana's brother, but whatever may give rise to my interest in the case, it is quite genuine and eventually, perhaps, an unusual story may come to light regarding its actualities.

On the home front all is serene, with Puny well on the mend and word from Alexandria that Aurelia's mother is resting comfortably but is remaining in the hospital. Aurelia got someone to telephone to Alrose for her and to inquire if Mr. J. H. was sending a truck for her. J. H. wasn't here but the clerk told her to grab a bus and come on home. Personally I can't quite untutored little Aurelia, milling around in a hurly-burly bus station and succeeding in climbing aboard a conveyance marked Natchitoches or Threepoint, and especially as she can't read, but I reckon she'll make it alright.

Tomorrow will be a busy day and I must fold up forthwith, but shall sit for a moment with my animals on the front gallery, the banana leaves are so heavily a-drip with dew and moonbeams....

Helen Baldwin 3223

10/11/48

Friday, October 15th, 1948.

Memorandum:

It has been a long day which included a trip to town to look into the cause of the neuralgia business.

And speaking of Natchitoches, I am reminded of something Dr. Knipmeyer mentioned yesterday, a tale I neglected to mention last night when I went off the track on the Goat Castle business.

In one of the finestst houses in town lived a Mrs. Clark, a millionaire. For years a lady without money lived with her, both as companion and nurse. Last week the millionaire, Mrs. Clark, died and was buried in New Orleans where a niece of hers lived, a lady who had twice inherited over a million dollars from different kinsmen. Following Mrs. Clark's funeral, her will was opened and everyone expected her faithful companion would be generously remembered in it, but there was only a reference to the companion, and mention of an envelope for her, properly sealed, and attached to the will. Except for this envelope and its contents, Mrs. Clark left her entire fortune to her extremely wealthy niece. The companion was handed the envelope after the reading of Mrs. Clark's will. "In grateful appreciation," it read, "for your years of faithful companionship and assistance....." The envelope contained a war bond of the \$18.50 denomination.

Of course one nice thing about the Catholic Church is that for a few dollars, one can leave it to a priest to say Masses and pray a departed friend or relative out of Purgatory. But in cases similar to the one mentioned above, I'm not sure but what some evil off-shoot of a wide spread religious order might accept fees to say Black Masses to pray such skin flints into Hell, - and probably do quite a thriving business.

Dr. K. also spoke of Miss Sally's nephew, Clarence Pierson, who had his eye gouged out recently when he smashed up his Rolls Royce in a drunken frolic. In New Orleans the other day, Clarence called Dr. Holbrook, his cousin's husband, asking him to come quick to his home where he had just been severely beaten by marauders who were still ransacking his house. Dr. Holbrook rushed to the Pierson's, with a squad of police in tow, only to discover on arriving that Clarence was drunk and deep in delirium tremens. Everybody has his problem, it would appear, and with Clarence it is an over wrought imagination, or the complete absence of one, I guess.

So much for yesterday, and now today's post deserves mention,
and not so far down the page as this.

It was grand having your letter and to know that you were
getting your painters now, so that that job will be over and
done with before the more bitter weather sets in.

It was characteristically kind of you to give me the particulars
regarding the "Bride of Fashion" or rather the list of people who
seem to rival a similarly extensive one in the Acknowledgements of
the Natchez book.

People like Miss Inez Montgomery, Katherine Miller and so on
may possibly have heard of Mrs. Davis, but that is only a
possibility. So far as having received any information from them,
the author obviously is perpetrating a fraud in trying to give
the impression, although, to be perfectly fair, I feel quite sure
he doesn't intend to give such an impression but merely to get
more books sold to the individuals and their kin by including their
names.

It was interesting that Dr. Hogan and Paul Veith should be
listed, and that by coincidence, in the same mail with your letter
should come a package, obviously a book from none other than
Dr. Hogan. On his visit here with Mr. Veith, enroute to Natchez,
he said he was going to send me the book he wrote on Texas.
I asked him not to do so before he received a further communication
from me. But here is the book anyway, but I haven't opened it as
yet, and am turning over in my mind just what disposition I shall make
of it. I may return it to him in its original wrapping, I may
keep it and write and thank him for it. I don't know which. There
are several points to be considered in the whole business, especially
as Paul Veith was once on intimate terms with the Worsleys, which
may or may not have carried several ramifications along with it.

And speaking of the Worsleys, the lady you mentioned in the
Acknowledgements, has no relationship to the ones we know, I
believe.

The enclosure you will find entertaining as usual. I
think Helen always writes a good letter, although heaven knows she
takes ~~him~~ long enough between times to compose a first rate
one, were she to employ the time between to study up something
which, of course, she doesn't.

And now I must fold, hoping the while that all the excitement
of your present domestic existence may well be on their way out
and that you may be able to collapse for a little moment and really
enjoy the new decors surrounding you. Thanks again for the grand
letter, and don't try to write when you are so terribly pressed for
time....

Roy Hansen (unclear)
DeRidder, La.
10/19/48
List of plants

Sunday, October 17th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Tonight you are in the theatre, and somehow in spite of
my knowledge that you were not listening to the Fred Allen show,
there was a telepathetic wave length making it seem as though
everything was in tune, even though the different programs
claiming our attention were probably so different.

Perhaps it is the same silvery moon over Manhattan and
Melrose that seems to tighten the bond. I have just returned
from the big house, - a little after 10, and perhaps you are
catching fleeting glimpses of the same lovely lunar spectacle that
only shines a little less dimly in the metropolitan area where
Mr. Edison's fine handiwork tends to rob the heavens of
their rural grandeur.

Be that as it may, I do hope your evening at the theatre
was ever so pleasant. Had you been at your radio, you would have
found Miss Bankhead and Mr. Allen hilarious in their satire on
early morning radio commercials, but truth to tell, it is
perhaps the remarkable voice of Miss B. and the excellent radio
personality of Mr. A. that really turns their successful tirades.

It was a comparatively quiet week in these parts, and quite
contradictory in weather, for Saturday the thermometer was in
the mid 90's and today in the mid 40's, with rain all over
Louisiana except Melrose where the skies are cloudless.

I slept a little later than usual this morning, or rather
remained in bed a little longer. My visit to the dentist on
Friday somehow tired me, although there was nothing at all
enervating about the X Ray work at hand, preparatory to vast
dredging operations on November 3rd, when, I suppose, I shall
feel precisely like Mr. Truman when he awakens on that sad day
for him, - following the Presidential elections on the 2nd. But
tired I was, and in bed I remained until nearly 6 o'clock, delighte
in an excellent program, consisting of Handel and Mozart compositions
for the piano forte.

Yesterday my patient wasn't so well. I telephoned Dr.
Sleanor and she paid a professional visit in the afternoon, leaving
some sedative medicine and other brew for an over active bladder and

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other problems confronting my patient. I administer the meds one every four hours. J. H. thanked me for my attention, and Dan, who doesn't like Dr. Worley, doesn't speak to me, but that isn't new. Perhaps he has heard I have some major dental business in the offing and is fretful because the plantation will take care of that, and besides, my Airdeale is still my active companion. But none of that really counts, so far as his unfortunate disposition goes.

Dr. Eleanor called again this afternoon, and while making her professional visit at the big house, Don came over to my house, bringing the "atchitoches" dentist and wife whom I had contacted Friday. We had a pleasant sitting, for they are grand people, and so the day played out almost before I realized it.

I heard the C. B. S. "You Are There" program, being the verdict in Marie Antoinette's trial. To have heard the trial itself would have interested me more, but the testimony at that outrageous process might not have been of a quality that would permit broadcasting. Two things about the program surprised me, 1st, the amount of French spoken without much translation, which must have made it difficult for some listeners, and 2nd, that during the recess prior to the appearance of the return of the jury, old Robespierre or Pouquier-Tinville had something to say about how much more thorough was the French Revolution in eradicating all aristocrats whereas the American Revolution had not done so, and such an aristocrat as John Adams had now become President of the United States. I can't imagine how the people organizing this program could have made such an error. If memory serves, Washington became the first President of the United States when the Federal Government was formed in 1789, and after serving for 4 years was re-elected for four years more, after which Mr. Adams became the Chief Executive. 1789 plus 8 being the Washington term, while October 16th, 1793 was the date of Marie Antoinette's conviction. Anyway I can figure the thing, it looks to me as though those old French revolutionists, as portrayed by C. B. S. were both confused in their contemporary concept of American politics, and were marvelous clairvoyant at the same time. I'll bet a million people tonight are writing to John Daily to call this error to his attention.

Under separate cover I am sending a couple of photographs taken by Mrs. Wake's group when here a couple of weeks ago. I started by referring to them in a Memo., when it occurred to me that you might want to indicate particulars regarding the various shots in a scrapbook, and so I have written on but one side of the sheet, so that, if you find it convenient to do so, you may cut out the paragraphs to attach along side the snapshots. All the particulars covered are already well known to you, but I thought reiteration might serve at some future time as a reminder. October, 1948 is sufficient to date them, I reckon, but I do think dates should accompany snapshots, don't you. And so to fold, and may you not be too tired after your busy, busy week end.....

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Monday, October 18th, 1948.

Memorandum:

During the night, Jack Frost put his finger on the cotton fields and they sagged from a vibrant green to a dull gun metal gray. But in his other hand, he carried a pint brush which he used with abandon to touch up of persimmon and tulip trees, turning them to scarlet and burnished gold.

The enclosed leaf leaves here a lovely coral red, but will probably be mere brown on reaching your true hand. It is from an oriental persimmon tree, similar to the ones referred to in the accompanying acknowledgement from Herr Hauser. For convenience I ordered these through the Madam's account, so that the note is addressed to the Madam. Herr Hauser's stock is of first quality and I'm sure the shipment will be entirely satisfactory. I thought we might plant these along the drive so that their height will compare nicely with the cone shaped pears along the same route, and I shall move the shorter, more circular shaped American persimmons, now occupying the place designed for the orientals, to other spots in unit "O. 1."

Now that transplanting time is just in the offing, I shall be-stir myself to set out privet between the pears and persimmons along the drive. I had hoped to use gardenias, but last year's cold slaughtered that effort. Then I had hoped for wax leaf ligustrum, but there seems a shortage of that shrub, and so I shall use privet, which is available, thus demarking the avenue with parallel lines of green for the winter season, while the fruit trees from February to November will dominate the drive with a seasonal succession of white blossoms, green leaves and vermillion fruit. Eventually, as water becomes available and circumstances permit, - shade developing, etc., we shall substitute the privet for gardenias, as originally planned, and so, with patience and a little care, our little kingdom will take on some of its more dominant features.

Well, and at long last, Aurellia reach Melrose from Alexandria late this evening. She has a cold, and an astonishing stock of tales to relate about how things operate in the Charity Hospital, where she left her mother. Among other things, it seems the hospital, in spite of weather reports, had not prepared for the advent of autumn, so that the place was quite without heat when the thermometer dipped to the 40's. Some of Aurellia's stories

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would be difficult to believe, were one not conscious that almost anything may or may not happen in state institutions under the Long regime. For example, Aurellia says her mother is in a ward with 35 other ladies, most of whom are about to have or just have had operations. She says that on Saturday night, at 12, the nurses all go home and not a doctor is to be found, and there in that ward, at least, the 35 ladies stew or freeze, as circumstances arise, with no one to assist them even so much as handing them a glass of water. Aurellia says she staid to be with her mama but was so busy bouncing bed pans, changing sheets and doing heaven knows what all, that she scarcely saw her mama all night long. She mentioned one huge lady who had been operated on Saturday, and who had glass tubes in her nose and her chest. This lady, having no one to respond to her call, tried to get out of bed in search of a bed pan, got all tangled up in the paraphernalia projecting from her person, and really had a terrible time until Aurellia got her somewhat untangled and put back to bed.

Under Huey P. Long, the politicians always did much praise of themselves for providing Louisiana school children with free text books, - on which the politicians undoubtedly received a huge rake off in the purchasing thereof, but they frowned upon anyone, as disloyal, if the opposition ever had the temerity to point out that free school books didn't mean so much if no schools were provided and no teachers were employed, to enable the children to make some use of the much vaunted text books. It would appear from this little side glance into current hospitalization that the Longs in this subsequent administration, have reversed the educational pattern by providing adequate buildings for the ailing, but no staff to save the patients from death, once they get inside the buildings.

So far as Aurellia is concerned, she is back home with a fearful cold, wore out from her labors, while her mother remains in the hospital, eating nothing, according to Aurellia, and still waiting to see what is going to be done "after them pictures they done struck inside her" have been studied by whatever staff doctors may eventually turn up.

It's all too fearful and wonderful, and makes no sense at all.

On the home front, the Madam is responding to the medicine being taken for the over active bladder. It is now 11, and I am just returned from administering medicine, and having a tussle with my charge whose electric blanket, having become too warm for her, was determined to do without any blankets or even a sheet for the balance of the night. I argued and ordered, but I suspect she kicked everything off as soon as I withdrew. I shall streak across the moon drenched garden again in half an hour, and see what is what. Off hand, one must admit that while the results may be somewhat dubious, the carryings on are impressive...

0033

Overdyke
10/16
3229

Tuesday, October 19th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Clear and cold. The elephant ears have collapsed for the season and the canna beds look like mares' nests. But the ozone is marvelous.

And yesterday they buried Uncle Oliver at Saint Mary's-on-the-Bayou. I reckon I may have mentioned the carpenters on one occasion or another. They are negroes living on Melrose between Little River and Red River. The two oldest ones were brothers, Oliver, around 100, and Nathan, in his 90's, I suppose.

None of Uncle Oliver's 8 or 10 children attended his funeral, for they have all preceeded him to the graveyard. But quite a few of his descendants honored him at his final rites, but not all, for that would have required the space of a cathedral, I guess. Roughly I have counted up his grandchildren to the number of 75, and I stopped adding on the list of his grandchildren when I was between 160 and 170. Had I a bit more time, I might round up a complete list which would probably excite the Associated Press or Lowell Thomas, but circumstances prevent me from getting back to Little River at the moment, and so I shall delay work on the family tree for a spell.

It was good to have been able to talk with Uncle Oliver for he could remember Civil War times and Reconstruction days on Cane River, while Uncle Nathan, who still comes to see me, always enchants me with his memoirs of the old days when he took a flyer to Mississippi when a youth where he worked on the plantation of Captain Jenkins, son of Dr. John Carmichael Jenkins of Elgin Plantation, near "atchez.

It was this same Carpenter family whom the F. B. I investigated during the war when some practice joker reported to the Washington Bureau that the Carpenters were in short wave communication with Moscow, the poor Carpenters, most of whom had never been further from Little River than Melrose, and dozens of them had never laid eyes on "atchitoches.

Never seemingly particularly athletic, the Carpenters are a hardy group of negroes and all during the blistering summer, Uncle Nathan in his 90's, used to ride 8 or 10 miles on a round from his cabin out to Melrose and back. And in a way, it was Uncle Oliver's undoing, this prowess on horseback, for although in recent years, he wasn't able to get astride a horse without assistance, once in the saddle, he was as sturdy as a youth.

3230

Recently he had persuaded a couple of his great grandsons to boost him aboard his steed, after which he departed on a long ride. On returning to his cabin, however, he discovered there was no one around, everyone being in the fields picking cotton. Not having sufficient strength to dismount by himself, he remained seated in his saddle for quite a long time, during which he developed a chill which, in the end, carried him off. Thus passes another ante bellum landmark.

On the home front, my patient seems a little better physically, and an inclination to be "crotchety" lends credence to the physical indications. The bladder problem is definitely improving but the physical and mental strength doesn't manifest any swing in the right direction. As you know, and as she used to, Alexandria is about 50 miles from Melrose. She suggested today that Aurellia this evening might walk down to the Charity Hospital to see her mama and return before sundown. Poor dear.

I reported her physical progress to Dr. Eleanor this afternoon with an inquiry regarding additional medicine. With proper advice on the professional side out of the way, the lady doctor told me she and Don had James Aswell to breakfast this morning, and in reply to a direct question from him if she liked his new book, she told him "Yes and no".

The new Aswell book is "Mid Summer Fires", and seems to be devoted to personalities of Watchitoches, easily recognized by local readers. I think the reason why local intellectuals don't care much for it is because he treats in some detail some subjects which might just as well be passed over casually or perhaps skipped completely. I believe, for example, there is a prominent character speculating on why he had supposed himself impotent, - and how he discovered he really wasn't, - a part of the volume which no one seems to care much for. I think it is not an important novel, although if it has enough of that sort of thing in it, it could, I suppose, rival "Forever Amber" for demand.

At 9 o'clock this morning, the Madam told Aurellia to go home and get in the bed and so the sooner rid herself of her terrible cold. I told her the same thing when she passed by my house to tidy it up, - in fact I wouldn't even let her make up my bed. At 12 o'clock noon, I found Aurellia still at Melrose, standing on a cold concrete floor, her hands in soap suds, washing Mattie's last night's supper dishes. Thus the big house got a lick and a promise, my house got nothing, Aurellia continued flirting with pneumonia while Mattie got somebody else to do her work for her, which is typically plantation, maddening and hilarious. And now I've got the snuffles, and after going to administer 11 o'clock medicine at the big house, I'm going to fold.....

Dora 10/16
3231

3231

Wednesday, October 20th, 1948.

Memorandum:

To begin with, two items from Shreveport might be mentioned.

Early this morning, the Weather Bureau staggered me by broadcasting this: "For Shreveport and vicinity, - sunny today and tonight. Cloudy and warmer tomorrow." I reckon I would be doing better, were I at this moment up yonder observing the phenomenon which certainly couldn't happen too many times in one person's life time.

And the other item revolves about that bird and animal enthusiast, Mrs. Lillian Trichel, lately become a widow. A day or two ago she noticed a squirrel high up on a branch of a tree in her garden. She thought it needed help. She always welcomes such opportunities. Accordingly she fetched a ladder from some where and mounted the same in the general direction of the playful animal. But as she came pretty close to it, the squirrel suddenly jumped to another limb, while at the same moment Miss Lillian lost her balance and crashed to the ground. Her knee cap and the two adjoining bones were crushed and she will be in a cast for the next six months. I reckon she knows better than to spank a bee, thereby exceeding my wisdom, but at 65 she ought to learn not to pursue squirrels on extension ladders.

It is pleasant to report that my patient is further responding to her medicine. The pus today disappeared from the urine specimen and the over activity of the bladder seems to have been corrected. Her physician will see her on the morrow to check up a little further on the physical situation. I regret to say, however, that while the disposition is pretty much on the bright side, the loss of memory in many respects doesn't seem to decrease.

I always like Dora when carrying on in the manner demonstrated by the enclosure. His account of Harding Carter recalls the curious but very definite transformation that took place in the career of Al. Smith, who was so liberal as Governor and so reactionary as head of the Empire State building. Somehow it almost seemed that after he had quitted politics and got entangled with the Dupont interests, he became even more conservative than the members of entrenched wealth for whom he labored in his last years.

... Perhaps this is just another example of the old adage:

1852

3232

"More Catholic than the Pope is the Protestant converted to Catholicism."

Dr. and Mrs. Rand were at their camp this afternoon and Mrs. Rand came over for a few moments, bringing the Madam a lovely potted Jerusalem Cherry and me an elegant Crestablanca bottle.

Aurellia noticed her coming into the garden and hurriedly tidied up the Madam's sofa before she arrived. In doing so a letter seems to have become lost, and I shall most certainly hunt diligently for it when daylight returns for it is quite hilarious, and I think you would get a great kick out of its phraseology. It is from disgruntled pilgrim, regerring to me as "a self appointed guide" and expressing regret that she and her party didn't fall into the hands of one of the Henry boys who would have understood the history of Melrose so much better and would have given them so much more time and taken them through so many more of the houses and out buildings".

On reading the letter, the Madam dryly remarked: "Too bad they didn't bump into Dan or Raynie at the front gate. They would have told them to go back where they started from before they got out of their car."

I think I remember the people vaguely, hipped on hunting antique beds, as I recall, and giving not a damn for anything else. At the time they tried to crash the dining room where dinner was already in progress, - a meal which I had left to show them Melrose. Why people should want to invade a dining room when the household was at dinner, I can't imagine, and apparently my stupidity infuriated them to the point of penning a protest. I certainly want to acknowledge the letter on the Madam's behalf, and I should like to send their original communication along to you, for I think you would relish it.

At the gin today, Ezra told me that of the thousands of bales turned out thus far, something over 500 had been from the fat Melrose acres and that the number would undoubtedly go over 600. I also learned that the mechanical post hole digger, operated by tractor power, couldn't get anywhere in recent attempts to get the thing going because of the extreme hardness of the soil because of the prolonged drought. Should the persimmons arrive before a long rain passes this way, I shall dig a hole in the ground, place the trees in it, covering the same with loose earth and pack it down with a good soaking from the hose. This will keep the trees in good condition and then I shall be able to plant them properly when circumstances are more favorable. So much for the opening of the autumn planting season.....

1852

3233

Thursday, October 21st, 1948.

Memorandum:

From where I sit, this paper looks quite spiffy, and I'm wondering how I come by it.

Well, aside from this oberstation, I haven't much news of interest. In fact perhaps the absence of news is news itself, for something must have happened to the Texas and Pacific which didn't so much as bring us a Times Picayune today, not to mention 1st or other types of mail. Perhaps we shall have two Picayunes on the morrow.

But what we missed in the post we made up in pilgrims, although none of them were very newsy.

Mrs. Vernon Cloutier came to see me this morning. She owns St. Charles Plantation, formerly the Marcisse Prudhomme plantation, - the Uncle Marcisse of Lestan's diary. The place is called St. Charles plantation because it is built on the site of the original Prudhomme fort on the Joyeous Coast. It seems that while during the past week the Madam and I have been speculating on why we know only the American names of these plantations, whereas all of them must have borne French names originally since everyone through here spoke French almost exclusively down to the verge of Civil War times. And it was just on this point that Mrs. Cloutier came to see me. She and her husband want to give their place a French name but everything Madam C. has suggested her husband doesn't find quite to her liking, nor does she, and so they agreed they would ask me for a suggestion.

"Beaufort" was my single worded sentence, - and she seemed entranced. After she had turned it around her tongue a few times to apparent satisfaction, I pointed out that it at least recalled the old fort, just as the huge old cisterns in her garden still bear mute evidence of its previous status, that Beaufort is a pretty grand ducal name, and best of all, it is something that can be as easily managed in today's Cane River English as in yesterday's French, and after dropping in to call on the Madam, she returned to me, much delighted with the new name, and promises to send me a fine present if she is as successful in selling Beaufort to her husband as I was in effecting such a speedy sale to her. And that fine present, - albeit they are rich, plus a nickle, will eventually buy a cup of coffee.

3234

It was Knipmayer Day, of course, but what with pilgrims from North Louisiana and East Texas here at the same time, we didn't have a chance to have much fun, to compare recent death lists, or take apart the "Down and Out Column". The only thing Dr. K. told me was that he thought the Madam looked surprisingly better and that Clarence Pierson, recent looser of an eye, will get about fifty thousand dollars. But come to think of it, he didn't tell me that, but I told it to him, having been told as much by somebody else.

Well, so things turn, and the Adam made it pretty well today without taking any medicine. Her physician came this evening about first dark, and was delighted to find her patient so much better. Following her consultation, I walked with her to her car. She says the Adam's heart is so surprisingly strong, it would seem as though it might be expected to keep right on going for another quarter of a century. But what depressed her was to think that of the three patients in this area, Miss Sally, Madam Regard, and the Adam, that of all three, and each failing, the only one with a good mind is undoubtedly headed for growing vagueness from week to week, the one possessed of the best mind in the whole group. It certainly does seem a pity, and yet the kindness of Adam Regard can readily balance any brain.

I guess about the cruellest thing Fate could ever do, as in some ancient Greek myth, would be the forcing of some poor human being to make a choice as to which one he would have to relinquish, intellect or kindness, which is certainly a stupid thought to consider.

I have ordered some crepe myrtles from Waxahachie Nursery, Waxahachie, Texas, today. Don't you get easily worn down by these strange Indian names. The nice thing about the real name of the old Indian who graced the nickles before Thomas Jefferson pushed him off, was Sitting Bull, as I recall, and I liked that name, because it was within the realm of something the average non-Indian could manage to pronounce. As for the crepe myrtles, I asked them to send us three dozen white ones and one dozen watermelon red ones. We shall thus be able to further florify the elephant traps and at the same time illumine Unit No. 2. Assuming we shall have a bit of extra moisture this year, these items ought to make great strides, and the nice thing about them is that once established, nothing can restrain them from blooming with abandon for a century at least.

I set out several lovely salmon pink crinums at Arenbourg today, and plan more doings at dawn. How fast these busy days slide along.....

3235

R.D. 10/10/48
3235

Friday, October 22nd, 1948.

Memorandum:

Another week draws to a close and I am hoping your new interior decorations are by now well effected and that you are heading into a peaceful and restful week end.

The cold of last week, so generally spread over the continent, has given way to full Indian Summer in these parts, with the air as balmy as Spring and a vast orchestration by myriad frogs to confirm the false impression.

About this season every year on Melrose there is usually quite a to-do where ever a pecane grows, and they appear, like Coca-Cola advertisements, to grow every where. This is the period when the great majority of the pecanes have not yet matured but when a portion of those developing earlier than the others, drop off. It is the precise time when everyone possessing one to a dozen hogs is anxious to have them range under the pecanes, where the porkers will fatten mightily on this mana from heaven. Annually J. H. drops the word that hogs found at large will be shot, and annually a hundred hog owners turn their swine loose at first dark and call them up before daybreak. By the law of averages, the majority of the animals get back home before dawn but a few victims are bound to fall before the blunderbus. Yesterday at dawn, J. H. shot three, while last night at 11:30, he killed another, and this morning he shot two more. In reality the pecanes falling to the ground this week are of no commercial account, but in another week or two the best of the crop, in case of a storm, will have fallen, and by some curious circumstance, this week's cannonade will incline owners still possessed of their animals to keep them shut up.

Somehow the owners invariably take the slaughter as a matter of course, and never seem to resent their losses much, although a fair sized animal these days is worth about sixty dollars on the hoof. And it is curious, in a way, that no matter how much the owner may prize his hog, once it has been killed, he will never admit that it is his property, and even disdains bleeding it and cutting it up for his own use or for sale.

Sometimes J. H. indulges in an hilarious mannerism when talking with people of color, assuming a whining note in his voice, when trying to persuade them to do something. This morning, after Sam Brown had disclaimed ownership of a punctured porker, J. H. saw Sam's 10 year old brother in law who is pig minder at the Brown establishment.

"Little boy, J. H. whines, "tell me whose hog is that"

3236

"That was us-es", the boy unwittingly declares.

"Well, that's what I thought, but your papa say not. He done forget his own piggy over night. You take the piggy home, little boy, and tell your mama to make you all some fine sausages, and when night comes down tonight, see to it your all pigs down break out again, you hear."

And the child grins, both at the talk and the whine, and drags the pig home, and since it has been brought from beyond the gaze of the outside world, I suppose the Browns are dining on pig tonight and probably not damning J. H. too much, since they all know it was their own fault, - not in turning the hogs loose nightly to feast on pecanes, but for getting caught.

From the big house this morning came word to illustrate how closely it teamed up Hilarity and Pathos can travel side by side. Before I had made a round, three different servants dropped by to see me, bemoaning the fact that the Madam was just a-carrying on. According to each visitor, the burden of her reproaches was the fact that the lady doctor had called on her last night and had chatted with her for sometime without ever having directed her to take any more medicine, and that because she didn't have to take the medicine every four hours any more, I didn't have to administer it to her at 8 p.m. and at midnight, and that she should have called Dr. Wenk when she originally felt a physician's aid, since she knew perfectly well that he would have given her heaps of medicine, the taking of which would have lasted her all winter.

She was still smoldering a little when I did visit her an hour or so later, but it took but a second to clear the little whisks of gloom she had been manufacturing. At the first disgruntled peep I cut it short by saying that I suspected what she secretly wanted was for me to wire Miss Alberta to instruct a Christian Science reader to intone Mrs. Addy's cures by remote control, but if that failed, I would conclude that she was dissatisfied with the efforts, even the success the lady doctor and I had had in working our scientific wonders, and that both she and I would withdraw as soon as I could summon Dr. Wenk to dish out his drugs and Sister to put them down her.

"I declare, you're a sight" was her immediate response, "and as for little Miss Alberta, Dr. Wenk and Sister, they can stay right where they are, even if I do fuss at you now and then."

The balance of the day she was as happy as a clam and tonight the poor dear coyly remarked she was going to miss taking midnight medicine but would try to content herself with the voice of Messrs. Truman and Dewey instead of listening for my step on the stairs.

As for myself, I'm trying to get rid of my sniffles, by moderate work in the warm sunshine, and I believe I am succeeding....

Miss Nellie 10/24/48
3237

Sunday, October 24th, 1948.

Memorandum:

How nice to have your Wednesday note in Saturday's post, and to know all goes well, except the unusual pressure exerted from both the business and domestic sides of the life line. I sincerely hope this week end witnessed a "cease-fire" from both sides, and that you were able to collapse for a little-breathing spell.

On this front, we seemed to have rather more than the average pilgrims, who, with one or two notable exceptions, were exceedingly dull, and their arrivals most inopportune times. John Gibson, little Miss Annie's husband, from Montgomery, was a case in point. He arrived ten minutes before supper time, bringing a bevy of numb-skull women and horrible children with him. I was in my bath and my boudoir was in an uproar. I somewhat reluctantly permitted them to invade the boudoir, but I put my foot down when they tried to storm my bath. These bags are of that common pilgrim type, frequently encountered, who have neither the intellectual nor cultural capability of comprehending anything they see, but are adamant to explore everything. They certainly provided me with a fine paragraph for the contemplated "Mignon's Pilgrim Problems".

I had to give some thought, too, in the direction of my patient. Last summer Sister and Sam Brown told her, - and God alone knows why, that if her double battery of fans proved insufficient to keep her cool at night, she might readily attain that desired point by pouring a glass of water over her sheet and another over herself. On Friday night she had her electric blanket turned on at a low level when first folding up, and then later, growing warm, left the darned thing on, but switched on the ceiling fan. Following this she anointed herself and her bed with water, the latter being a particularly dangerous procedure, I should imagine, since she sleeps on a rubber sheet, which, naturally, retains the glass of water intact, and really ought to do wonders with the electric blanket, - and herself, once the blanket gets well soaked. Such carryings on.

Saturday morning she announced she didn't sleep well the night before, that her bladder, quite normal in daylight hours, is over-active at night, and she needs medicine for that to be administered nightly at 12. I recommended we consult her physician before resuming last week's particular type of medicine, and after consulting with the doctor, Lo! we both discovered that what the patient actually needed more than anything else was a very slight sedative at folding up time, which, by inducing rest, might eliminate the risks of electrocution. I ask you: Is this a business....

755C

3238

Aurellia reported this morning that for the first time in months, my lady's chamber was in perfect order, showing no evidence of any kind of tempest during the night, while the Madam herself expressed herself several times during the day that her new medecine was perfect and that she hadn't had such a good night's sleep in ever so long. And the most satisfying angle of it from my point of view was the fact that the sleeping powder was so light that it left no after effect such as inevitably followed the block busters her son-in-law used to administer with such abandon.

Of the enclosures, you will be particularly interested in Miss Nellie's, not especially for its contents, perhaps, but just to share the satisfaction with me that she is back home again. Of course I hadn't heard of Miss Jeanne's misfortune. You may she is Mrs. McDowall of Oakland, sister of Duncan Minor. The Mrs. Tyre mentioned in the letter is supposed to be a left-handed off-spring of Miss Jeanne, but curiously enough, it isn't known if either mother or daughter know of their relationship, as the child is said to have been removed from the mother's presence at birth. Mrs. Tyre lives across the road from Oakland, on Evergreen, which adjoins Montaigne on the North and Montebello on the West, and it was along the road defining its Southern border that Duncan Minor rode for 20 years, - nightly, to spend the hours until dawn at Glenwood, home of Jenny Merrill of Goat Castle murder fame. Another fact about Evergreen which might have been noted in Dr. Butler's book is the fact that the property once belong to none other than Miss Eliza Young. Lord, Lord, how the princely properties and peculiar properties of Natchez entwine and entangle, one with another.

On my reading machine last night, I read the first page of New Orleans Woman. Mr. Kane opens the book with a gathering in a country house in Delaware in the 1828's or possibly in the early 1820's, and has the servant precede the departing guests into the hall to "turn on the lights". I fell out right there. Do you reckon Mr. Kane had gas or electric lights being turned on in the 1820's. Or was the maid merely turning on the candles, currently in use at the time. "Well, anything he does is alright...."

Just before Fred Allen went on the air, I caught an announcement of the death of Franz Lehar. I'm afraid my thoughts throughout the following program were less concentrated on that broadcast than on a thousand memories of happinesses the compositions of the Austrian creator of The Merry Widow and like scores had afforded me. So long as music is played, Herr Lehar's works will continue to be performed and he will accordingly live on through the hearts of men everywhere. It is wonderful to contemplate how much pleasure during the past hundred years the waltzes of the Strausses and of Lehar have brought to the world, - possibly more happiness to greater numbers of people than any other composers of the period. How much richer is every human heart for having the heritage of the Blue Danube and the Merry Widow....

015C

Lucy Morgan 10/19

3239

Monday, October 25th, 1948.

Memorandum:

There must be a contraption of atoms in the offing, - everything was so peaceful about the place today. And the pilgrims, some from Ohio, some from Illinois and some from Louisiana, were charming.

As for the mail, there wasn't any, save a few advertisements and Parrish newspapers, which, perhaps, was just as well, for the clerk was away, his mother having died in Cloutierville last night. Teddy Baronowsky hot-foots it from supervising the gin to give a quick glance at the postman, and I reckon both men were just as pleased that 1st Class items were probably carried over by the train until the morrow.

I'm in the doldrums, so far as reading is concerned. I read another page from New Orleans Woman, and was impressed by the impression given that on her marriage in Delaware, Myra Clark accompanied her husband, Mr. Whitney to his home in Binghamton by way of the Hudson River. The last time I was in Standing Stone, Asylum, Binghamton and Whitney's Point, all four were not on the Hudson but the Susquehanna and no amount of sailing up and down the Hudson would ever get you to Binghamton without leaving the Catskills between you and it. But then, I must remember Mr. Kane is writing fiction, merely using the names of real people and places. It's all so wonderful.

Since giving Madame Cloutier Beaufort for her plantation name, I have found myself thinking several times about the probable name of Melrose, as between 1750 and 1833, for during those years the house wherein I dwell was the plantation residence, as you know, and occupied by the French speaking mulatto noblesse. It wasn't until about 1890 or 1895 that old Mr. Henry changed the plantation name from Yucca to Melrose. But Yucca is a Spanish name for that vicious plant, the Spanish Dagger, and I doubt very much if Yucca was the name of the place in ante bellum times, since the mulatto noblesse would most certainly have given it a French and not a Spanish name. I have no idea what the French word for Yucca, but translating the thing from the English of Spanish Dagger, I assume it might have been something that would sound ridiculous and altogether non-plantation-ish. Henceforth, until by some slim chance, I stumble over the real name by which the place was known in early times, I shall refer to the big house as Melrose and the earlier residence I occupy as Yucca. All of which matters

3240

not a pin, and yet I can't quite picture the place ever having been styled Poignard "spagnol", which certainly would have been hilarious and meaningless.

I passed by the gin this morning and have nothing to report from that quarter, for everything seemed to be rocking along much as on any Monday morning. But I must register my astonishment that with all the hang-overs on Monday, there doesn't something fearful happen, what with all the flying wheels, fan belts, relentless presses and the like. To the old adage about a special God for drunks and fools, one must add one for the department of hang-overs, too. Not that so many people are killed in accidents, but rather that so many escape them is what puzzles me.

J. H. and Celeste ran up to Shreveport to visit the State Fair now in full swing there. Their mention of it recalled to my mind that I passed through the town during the same seasonal festivity in 1939. Having no interest in the business at that time, I don't know what attraction it was featuring then. This year it seems to be Fanny Sally Rand. When passing through the garden tonight, I noticed J. H.'s house is quite dark. Perhaps he and Celeste headed in the opposite direction for tonight's entertainment, for Ringling Brothers-Barnum and Bailey's Circus is playing in Alexandria, which seems quite a piece in time and space between here and Madison Square Garden about an old March.

Last night, - it must have been between 11 and 12, for a lop-sided moon was just rising over the African House, someone tapped on my window. It was the Dark Duke. Blood spattered the white cuff of his left cuff, and his ebony fist glistened with gore. At first glance, I thought it was a bandage job, but he explained he wasn't hurt, but the other fellow wasn't looking so good. I asked for no details, and suppose I was right in assuming an encounter must have taken place at the Social Club. He said he would like to talk a little if I had time. I did. I felt everyone would feel happier if the stains of battle were eliminated and the Dark Duke concurred. I gave him a couple roast beef sandwiches and a glass of wine. The sandwiches probably absorbed whatever beverage may have contributed to the earlier encounter. The wine was insufficient to out-weigh the sandwiches. He wanted to talk about how happy he is with his wife and child, the fun he used to have in the old days before tractors when he used to drive Emma, the mule, whom he had trained to turn around at the end of the cotton rows by whistling. Not a word was breathed about happenings during the past hour. A cigarette, - the Club had closed, - and it was time for the Dark Duke to depart. Obviously it was as well to be under the roof of a white man if the hill billy deputy sheriff was scouting about the Club to discover who had spilled blood. But by then it was all quiet, the lop-sided moon a little more drunken in appearance, and the Dark Duke, with steady stride, dissolved through the bamboo...

Carolyn Ramsey
10/28/48

3241

Tuesday, October 26th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Alphonse's barn burned last night.

About 10 o'clock, I made a little tour of Yucca and Melrose, imagining I smelled smoke, but discovered nothing by way of a smudge pot. This morning I learned that hard by Uncle Dore's house, Alphonse's barn when up in flames about 11. I doubt if that is what disturbed me, for it could scarcely have been smudgeing that long.

And curiously enough, when Alphonse discovered the fire, he decided it was so advanced that he went back indoors and went to bed. A few minutes later, J. H., returning from Natchitoches, saw the blaze, and immediately got a negro to assist him in saving something. They succeeded in dragging out a Ford tractor, still intact, although the tires were about burned off the wheels.

There were about \$500.00 worth of corn in the building, \$400.00 worth of cotton, a trailer worth a couple of hundred dollars, and so on. J. H. said he believed he could have saved everything except the corn, had he been there at the time Alphonse decided on going to bed. Of course there was no insurance.

Only a few months ago, Alphonse went into a perfect stew about Alfred setting his dog on Alphonse's hog, and the feud continues to flare as brightly as at the time of its inception, and just let the barn start going up in flames, and Alphonse calmly folds up his beard. Was it "ew bear who used to say: "Monkeys is the craziest people."

And there is another aspect: - a rich white planter and a penniless negro madly fighting the flames to save the property of A. "ettoyer, too dazed or disdainful to do anything more about his own property than park his hips on his downy couch will his neighbors are blistering themselves in his behalf. But all this is too much to begin with, and so I shall let the whole thing go from this point.

From the enclosure, I take it that little Miss Ramsey hasn't bogged down in a snow drift as yet, which seems remarkable, in view of the cold weather in October along the Gulf Coast, so far South from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, - where ever in the world that may be.

3242

I must be-stir myself and get a line off to her before long, although I haven't hit a lick in her direction since she was here. Somehow sending a letter to General Delivery, Marshall, Texas, seems almost futile, and especially so as little Miss Ramsey, up until now, at least, hasn't been famous for the briskness of her own responses.

I guess I average about 10 or 15 letters a day, and while some of them, - Ah! how well you know, - aren't "worth the powder and shot", still, what with other details to claim the scan from dawn to dusk, I don't feel impelled to rush into General Delivery items. But I am trying to fashion a fairly detailed outline for the articles she mentions, and I shall probably get them in the mail by mid November.

The Tuesday morning sobriety obtained at the gin this morning when I passed by. Fugabon had something to say about the Cotton Social Club to the North of Arambourg and the Melrose Social Club to the South of it. He thought "us-es" ought to open a third, - this one on Arambourg, - to catch customers going both ways. Before we had settled the problem, we decided it would be nice to televize the Arambourg Social Club, so that the customers at our, - I mean "us-es bar" might be able to partake in the scuffling in "us-es" place while at the same time, thanks to the television, keep an eye on the doings at both the other clubs. It was all pretty silly, but Fugabon laughs easily, and the bales kept right on bouncing from the press.

The Madam had rather expected Essae Mae to have the "Gilmore Friends" in Baton Rouge prior to release date, and thus get one to her by Monday. When a meager 2nd class mail came in this morning, she suggested we might ask Essae Mae's Natchitoches Library if it had a copy to lend us. I inquired. They had never heard of the Saxon book, but were greatly interested, asking if I knew who published it and said they would stock a number of copies. With Lyle having contributed to the Picayune over a quarter of a century, one would think that paper would have something to say about his "Memories on grounds of former association, let alone the fact that it is devoted to Louisiana people and places of distinction. Heaven knows they give your friend, Mr. Kane, enough space, - but perhaps there may be the very reason why Dr. Butler, James Aswell and Lyle Saxon's books are omitted from the columns of that paper. I had never thought of that angle before, - that Mr. Kane might have sufficient pull with the literary editor to suppress reference to books on local subjects that might impinge on Kane sales.

Well, Lord, all this and a nickle would buy one a cup of coffee, but "sleeps coming down on me", and I must fold....

MISS

Overydye

10/27/48 3243

W.D.L. 10/27/48

Wednesday, October 27th, 1948.

Memorandum:

I'm tired.

Which is certainly a gay and considerate way to begin a letter. But by frankly confessing the situation, I may make it easier for you to toss this into the basket without weighing yourself down with it.

I have spent much of the past twelve hours with my patient, who started off in a depression this morning, -- "Why do I have to be kept from getting around", -- "Why do I have to keep on living", -- "Why can't I die and be rid of all this".

For my part, I kept the faucets of sweetness and light turned on full blast all day, trying to wash away these gloomy thoughts, but I succeeded rather poorly.

The lady doctor called this evening. She found her mental condition much deteriorated, but expresses admiration at her apparent physical stamina. She says the mental situation obviously will not improve but the physical might survive a decade or two.

Dr. Eleanor was kind enough to bring down her duffel to give me a few tests in preparation for the business I have at hand next week. Blood pressure and all that seems to be alright with me but I have to take some stuff to step up clotting propensities.

Perhaps the physician saw I was tired, for she did her best to reflect a gay mood, although a wisdom tooth has her slightly under the weather. She told me of an unusually huge negress to come to her for an examination today. Weighing several hundred pounds, she had the greatest difficulty in getting her on to the table, - a heavy metal thing, but both physician and patient were nearly wrecked when the examination was over, for the table somehow rose up on end as the doctor tried to assist the recumbent figure, and it was only by a miracle that the both of them weren't crushed beneath the thing.

In spite of the colored lady's vast tonnage and the inordinate rolls of fat, it was obvious that she was pregnant. The physician expressed her astonishment to the patient that physical contact with her husband was possible.

3244

"Oh, I ain't married, the patient declared quite frankly, "but I suppose I'se pregnaft. You see, I'se a maiden lady and a member of the Baptist Church. But sometimes, when I misses it a heap, I sneaks jus' a little."

Well, Lord! let's see what else I know. Oh, yes. A letter from Essie Mae to the Adam today announces that she and Lois Lester and Helen Ferris will come on the week end of the 7th, if that is alright with the situation at Melrose, and will remain a day or so. I shall respond tonight, telling her they are doing an act of charity in coming to divert the Madam, although they themselves will probably have a rather dull time, what with the Adam's habit of folding up at 4:30 and the fact that I may not be particularly active over that week end. It isn't easy getting across finer points to Essie Mae, but I feel I had better tell them frankly to come prepared to entertain themselves which the three of them shouldn't have much difficulty in doing.

I saw Celeste for a moment this morning. She told me she attended a funeral in Watchitoches yesterday and was surprised to find Sister among those present. Sister told her not to tell her mother she had seen her, saying she would come to spend Thursday at Melrose, - which is something to look forward to on the morrow. The enclosures speak for themselves. Mrs. Lake is a very kind person and wont it be nice seeing a photograph of the lady she mentions. Of the reference to Mr. Laughlin, it would seem off hand as though he must border on being a male Frances Benjamin Johnston. After all the Overdykes, - formerly spelled Oberdykes, - did haul him a hundred miles down here to take pictures of the very places they themselves plan to use. Something tells me Mr. Laughlin had better get wix busy with his bread and butter notes or transportation may not be quite so easy on his next go-round.

Mrs. Rand spent half an hour with us this afternoon. She did much on the lighter side to lend gaiety to the sitting, but with scant success. She told me Dr. Rand is to address some civic group in Watchitoches one day next week, - and I suppose it will be on the subject of Camellias, for within another six weeks camellias will begin unfolding their glories in the Lafayette area, and, if memory serves, Dr. Rand is President of the Camelia Society. She says his diet has to be watched very carefully, and that he is supposed to take insulin at precise hours but that this morning he was operating on a doctor, and the situation developed that required Dr. Rand to continue the medical skill on the delicate business at hand slapp through his eating time, and an hour and a half beyond, which threw the domestic program out of line, for their had been several people bidden to the Rand board, and dinner, guests and hostess were in a dither, wondering just when and if their host would arrive. I am glad he was able to get away from the operating room and the belated dinner and spend the afternoon up here.

And now, thanks to this little chat with you, I feel ever so rest, and shall dash off a few run-of-the-mill letters and thence to my downy couch.....

Freeman
(nursery
(10/23)

3245

October 28th, Thursday, 1948.

Memorandum:

How nice to have your elegant week end letter today.

Well can I imagine how full-up the past couple of weeks must have been. Surely the pile up of office affairs must have been pretty staggering after the interim at home, which, I imagine, was even more wearing, for nothing is quite so enervating, I think, as trying to exist in a Manhattan apartment being done over by decorators. Without sensing it, one grows accustomed to the big open galleries in the South where or on which the house may be turned inside out during such processes, and the ease with which inside jobs are thus effected is more saving on the nerve system than those who haven't tried sleeping on a pile of furniture in the middle of a paint filled room can grasp.

I am certainly glad for your sake that things are beginning to get back in place again, and now if you can only get a moment or two with nothing to demand your attention save the surveying of the return of peace and order, the job will perhaps have been wroth while.

I'm so glad to know you enjoyed the B. Lillie show, and thanks for giving me a summary of its contents. The skit about the composers sounded perfectly wonderful, and surely the laughs provided by little Miss B. represented precisely the kind of relaxation that would benefit you no end.

And speaking of little Miss B. recalls your inquiry in reference to a line from Mr. Bachelier regarding chestnut trees at Arenbourg. I have planted three and two have died, but the third one appears to be doing ever so nicely. It is located in the South West area of Unit No. 1., between one of your tiny mimosas and the elephant trap. In Louisiana these chestnuts, - not unlike those blooming so mightily on the Champs Elysees and at Versailles, aren't supposed to do very well except in the hills. But I had a feeling we might be able to raise a very pretty one at Arenbourg for sometimes things not originally expected to thrive well in river bottom soil really do quite well along Cane River, and I thought it would do no harm to take a try. I don't know if this one will have the white or the red candle shades for blossoms, for it is still small, but I shall nurse it along, and if we really get adequate water supplies next summer, it w ought to to do a heap of growing and so be able to bloom before so very long.

3246

And while speaking of Arenbourg, I would refer to the enclosure. Today I sent a check covering the crepe myrtles, which eventually ought to do a lot in giving color for three or four summer months, don't you think.

Thanks for telling me about the contemplated exhibition of the Hapsburg treasures at the Metropolitan. I certainly hope the plan is effected, and then, thanks to your facile pen, I shall have an opportunity to learn all. I wonder if the original Mexican Codex will be included in the display. By the way, do you ever hear from or about Herr and Frau Jaffe which, - or rather whose marriage always struck me as being one of the most unexpected nuptials - recall. I never knew Lady Olivier so very well, save for the business contact and a visit or two to her apartment, but I did assist Herr Jaffe sometimes outside of business hours, and it always struck me their personalities were never designed the one for the other.

The home front was quieter today, - until 3:30, when Sister and her husband blew in for a couple of hours stay. They thought the Madam was looking better, but little did they suspect that it was another physician's care that gave that impression, - if any, and fortunately the Madam didn't spill the beans. The told me my face looked a little swollen, asked if I had a tooth requiring attention, and proceeded to set me straight as to which would be the proper dentist to consult, etc., etc. I thanked them, and told them I certainly would have the matter looked into with the next week. Before they were downstairs, the Madam sighed and said she was mighty glad they were gone, for Sister made her head feel like a tar bucket with a bee buzzing around in it. To which I added my fervent "Amen."

On the plantation, cotton continued to roll, and at supper J. A. told me this year's crop was just about wrapped up, - the most favorable harvest season he could ever remember, and that God might turn on the heavenly faucets any time he cared to now.

It was good of you to tell me about the Trocadero-Chaillot business. I don't know where the name Chaillot came from but the convent of Chaillot was flourishing in Louis XV's time, occupying an extensive establishment which in earlier times had been a chateau in what was then the somewhat remote suburbs. This present building may be the dominating building of the Paris Exposition which was held along about 1937 or 1938, which I believe was built slap on the foundations of the old Trocadero. I remember it appeared on the front cover of a special illustration issue of the Exposition, but I didn't know then that it was styled the Palais de Chaillot, and I haven't seen an picture of the building where the present seances of the U. N. are being held. So much to talk about, how fast this sitting comes to a close. Again my warmest thanks for the happiness your letter brought and how well do I remember 9 ye ago...

8158

Caroline Danmon

10/26/48

3247

Friday, October 29th, 1948.

Memorandum:

What an unexpected plaisir to find your nice letter of Monday in this morning's post.

I sincerely appreciate your thoughtfulness in advising me regarding particulars directly from Hastings House. Pamie arrived from New Orleans this afternoon, where Sister had reported the bookstores were stacked with the volume, but Pamie couldn't find my, and said the three or four places he tried didn't know when the book was to be released, although they had counted on it for the 25th.

I shall drop a note to Eddie Dryer and see what we can learn from him.

J. A. sent me a crew of ten men this morning before 7 o'clock, - released from this season's cotton crop. I had them cut down the bananas, cannas, etc., throughout the gardens, and set half of them to hauling truck loads of cotton hulls from the gin to cover the roots of the things just cut down. The other men I set to work removing pecane limbs which had broken during the long hot summer, and generally tidying up the place.

J. A. wanted my advice, too, on what should be done with the space at the juncture of the two roads where the old gargae used to stand. I recommended painting a pecane in the middle of the little square, - or triangle, rather, - and holding down each corner of said triangle with red and white crepe myrtles, backed by privet, to give a little color in winter time. He asked me if I would supervise. I said I would but knew so little about dynamiting, - for I reckon it will require blasting of the former concrete floor before we can get down to earth, and after that much dirt will have to be hauled in to counteract the oil that remains from too many years of garage operations, and oil in the earth is inclined to be deadly for cultivated plantes. But with half the plantation or so, I reckon I ought to effect some sort of an impression on the spot.

This morning also brought some Ohio pilgrims who had

3248

just passed through "atchez where they had visited Miss Myra, and said Devereux looked grand. Miss Myra, they said, showed them the camelia garden - had laid out for her, and asked them to tell me how they liked its appearance. They said they liked it as much as Miss Myra did, and that seemed to be ample all the way 'round.

Had not too many other demands been made on me at noon time, I should have enjoyed my dinner thoroughly, - which, aside from fried chicken, snap beans, French fried potatoes, cauliflower, tomatoe salade and ice cream, - included buttermilk fresh from the churn, along with corn bread. I certainly like buttermilk immediately after churning time, and I passed up coffee for another go-round.

Eugene was back from burying his mother, and T. Baranowski was away because of a fever, while a little before noon, Aurellia flew out for Alexandria, having received a telephone call from the hospital, saying her mama was ready to be discharged. I hope the poor thing is alright again, although having seen some strange dismissals from Louisiana hospitals, I shall only have some vague idea as to how she is after Aurellia reports on the morrow.

You know, it just occurs to me, for the first time in my life that I never pass by Aurellia's house, which seems a little odd, since I am forever dropping in on my negro friends, whether they be ill or well. It must be that my inclination is in the direction of the people of deeper color, so far as social contacts and little health missions are concerned, but never until I began this paragraph did it ever occur to me that I never do pass by the Pynogs. Well, let us hope poor neotine is all well again and that Aurellia doesn't have another collapse from one member of the family or another for at least the balance of this year.

Poor Celeste, poor Adam Regard. Celeste thought it would be grand to fly to "ansura for All Saints, - "everyone frolics down there," and thence to New Iberia to see her former sister in law, "etty Regard Courager, for a few days. And so they took off today for a week of it, - Adam Regard and her gall stones, and Celeste with V. N.'s heartiest blessing. Celeste's own only hesitation about going was her promise to bring back my corpse from town next Wednesday, but I surmounted those qualms for her speedily. To be perfectly honest, I would rather have one of my negroes with me anyway. And so the world turns, with 99 percent dying to find some way to kill time and 1 per cent trying to get a million more things accomplished in a day.....

0236

3249

Sunday, October 31st, 1948.

Memorandum:

May I tell you that the package from your true hand arrived in perfect condition in Saturday's post.

How characteristically thoughtful of you to have wrapped it so beautifully for presentation on Christmas morning. The design is perfect and little Aurellia is going to be one joyous proud peacock when she receives this charming remembrance. How graciously you light up star after star in your crown. How good

is God, how good are you.

In yesterday's post, too, came Proud Destiny, and from here on out, I reckon I'll be recalling certain passages of it to you from time to time. In the same post came James T. Adams The Adams Family which I wanted to re-read. It was transmitted from print on to records by one Mr. Bach, I believe. When I saw both books, it was my intention to re-read the Adams one first, but I was curious to see who had read the Proud Destiny item, and accordingly I sampled one record and in doing so, proved to myself that sometimes the appeal of a popular singer is even greater than a popular song. For, as you have already anticipated, it was your friend, Alexander Scourby whose voice came forth, - a perfect medium for expressing this delightfully vista of 18th century Europe. And of course the Adams family will have to take a back seat now until Mr. Scourby has said his piece.

I have read but three or four hours from the book and am hoping that the particulars with which I am not acquainted are as authentic as those which are obviously correct in their general interpretation. Naturally I was enchanted to run into Lenormant d'Etoiles, what with my vast admiration for that gentleman's wife, and I must say that what the author puts down about Mme. de Compadour seems precisely in line with my own understanding of her exceptional merit. You may recall that it was at Etoiles that de Beaumarchais gave the first public reading of the American Declaration of Independence. For years I used to make it a point to visit all the residences of Mme. de Compadour still extant and the sites of those which have vanished, but for some reason I never did get to d'Etoiles, and why I should have failed, I can't understand. I am further ashamed to confess that I am not even certain just where it was situated, but I believe it was a little to the South West of Versailles, beyond the forest of Senart. And now I'm glad I never did look for it, since I may share the pleasure with another one day and that will be twice as much fun.

3250

The Madam is forever recounting a tale from the North Carolina mountains which I must relate herewith. A traveler, proceeding on a lonely road, was startled by the screams of a woman coming from a cabin far back from the road. On investigating the traveler discovered a husband was beating his wife unmercifully and the latter was screaming for assistance. Manfully the traveler intervened and separated the assailant from his victim, whereupon, to the traveler's astonishment, the wife got up, laid hold of an iron skillet and broke the traveler's arm for having thus interfered with the domestic differences as between herself and her husband.

I was reminded of this tale when I received the enclosed letter. How the man had the nerve to write me in view of what has gone before astonishes me. And after I had saved Madam's Moore's manuscripts for her, I am equally at a loss to understand her actions in handing them slap over to her "assailant", who still supposed they were in my possession. Of course not a peep has been heard from Mrs. Moore since last year sometime. And people solemnly tell me he has to be born in the "outh to understand colored people.

It was ever so pleasant to see Dr. and Mrs. Rand this afternoon. While the ladies chatted, Dr. Rand and I sat at Yucfa where he ran through a number of notes he had recently made on laws covering the hospitalization of slaves, etc., and I shall be glad to call some of this to the attention of my friend in the L. S. U. Medical School library, for I think some of the data will dovetail very neatly with some of his studies. Mrs. Rand, on learning I expected to be in town a part of the day Wednesday, declared she would run up in the morning and spend the day with the "adam, returning home in the evening with the doctor, and that ought to work out very nicely for everyone here.

I heard nothin' interesting on the radio today, which is rather unusual for Sundays. Several times I got as far as turning the machine on, but each attempt came to naught, what with some interruption invariably breaking in at just the wrong moment.

On Tuesday, the citizens are asked in this State to vote on some 40 odd amendments to the Constitution. I think at this writing the Louisiana Constitution, some 20 years old, already has about 240 amendments. Another 20 years and like the tail that wagged the dog, the local supreme document will be all Amendments and little else. I talked with the Governor's secretary this morning when he passed this way, - Senator Fredericks, and he voices the Governor's fears that so few people in the rural districts will vote on Tuesday that the city dwellers may kill all his phoney Amendments, which I certainly hope may be the case. Added to this that the "eather man predicts rain, - bless his soul, - and how nice it would be to washout the Governor's trick legislative program and bring us a downpour of water for Arenbourg at the same time.....

R.D. 3251

10/30/48
Encl. 10/4

November 1st, 1948.
Monday.

Memorandum:

We had a shower, may I tell you.

Not that it amounted to much, for it lasted but 15 minutes, but it is such a remarkable fact that I find myself elated, not so much for the quantity of water which didn't fall, but for the promise of further rains which, I hope, are at this late date just in the offing.

And along with the damp, we are having a heat wave, and as I write these lines after 9 p.m., I find it very comfortable to have all doors and windows open and my electric fan going a mile a minute. You really can't blame them, I suppose, but the silly banana plants we cut down last Friday all suddenly took a new lease on life and today a number of them shot up 5 or 6 inches. If only our pear trees at Arenbourg have sense enough to read their calendar and not suddenly burst into bloom, - only to get caught by some passing freeze, then everything will be alright.

On the plantation all hands were busy as bees today, - and ex-cotton pickers from town were here in force, too, --all intent on gathering pecanes. I think J. B. was lucky to finish his cotton crop last week and have this week open with a little shower which set the pecanes cascading from the trees. My secretary didn't reach me until after 8 tonight, and says he was busy from 2 until 8 in weighing incoming mountains of the things. If the present speed in gathering them goes on at the present rate, I reckon a week or two ought to see the major portion of the crop gathered, quite unlike former years when the garnering has been so leisurely that it has dwaddled along until Christmas in some years. With the propensity of most local people of color to dispose of their earnings soon after getting them, I'm thinking the local "Social Clubs" are going to have meager business by the time December breaks through.

I hope you are sufficiently interested still in Proud Destiny so that occasional references to it on my part will not pall upon you too much, for it is the type of thing I like to discuss with you so endlessly. I have reached the point where Josephine and is making his incognito visit to Paris, and up to this page I have found the book excellent, and most especially the concept of Dr. Franklin, as presented in these pages.

3252

If there be any doubt in my mind as to anything the author has gone slightly away on, it is in the shade of over-doing the sex element in the relations of the Queen and de vaudreuil, which seems beyond my understanding of Marie Antoinette's relations with her youthful Versailles friends. But that is merely my opinion. I recognize so many old names almost forgotten, such as Rose Bertin, the Queen's favorite dealer in fine dress goods, Monsieur de Campan, the King's librarian, and so on, - names which used to be so familiar to me a decade or two ago.

I thought I noticed one slight slip, - and of no importance, - when the author describes Joseph's arrival at Versailles where he is met by the Queen and her ladies on her staircase. The author reports the Queen as remarking upon the change in her brother's appearance, including the fact that the hair was getting gray at the temples and thinner on top his head. I doubt if anyone with the possible exception of Dr. Franklin, ever appeared at Versailles, without wearing a wig, and most certainly the Count of Palconstein did not blow in from Vienna without a perruque. The Queen certainly had bright eyes if she could remark the above graying and thinning hairs on her brother's head through his fashionable, although possibly sedate, topees.

In reading of Joseph's visit to Versailles, I was reminded of Maugras' account of it, in a book whose name I do not remember. I think I have mentioned Maugras' name before, - Charles, I believe was his first name. If you liked Proud Destiny, you would like Maugras, too, I think, for while it inclines toward a more strictly historical work, it is so much like the "utchwangler item that the latter ought to make an excellent entresole for the other. I recall so well an account of the Duchesse de Grammont contriving to get Joseph to visit her brother, the Duc de Choiseul, at their estate in the Loire valley on his way back to Austria, and how she remarked to the Emperor, in referring to "hateloupe, - "Nous avons une petite chaumiere la-bas...." I don't recall ever having seen a picture of Chateloupe, which, I believe, was destroyed during the revolution, but I remember its foundations, which were enormous. As I recall, it was built with funds provided by Madame des Ursins as a semi-independent country principality for herself while still tilting the sceptre of Spain, but already sensing that she couldn't hold on to the golden bauble forever. I shall be interested to see if Proud Destiny ever introduces the Grammonts and Choiseuls further along in this piece.

The enclosures speak for themselves. The reference to the sacrilege in cleaning up, refers to Joe Henry's frequent flights into such business when spending a week end here. I'm trying to anticipate such disasters whenever possible, but it is a large undertaking where there is so much that is unappreciated and comparatively limited housing space to store the treasures to keep them from pillage.....

Miss Nellie
10/17
3253

Tuesday, November 2nd, 1948.

Memorandum:

The weather continues warm, all blue and gold, while the bananas continue their mad growth toward Winter and destruction.

Yesterday's gleanings in the pecan department netted seventeen thousand pounds. Today's harvest was estimated at between 25,000 and 30,000. In other words, it's a case of all hands to the pump and the well doesn't seem to be anywhere near dry.

Today's pilgrims were fewer than usual, although one of the passers-by surprised me in the person of Rudolph's friend, James Cunningham. He was on his way from Denton to New Orleans where he is to be located henceforth. I think he is with Firestone or Goodyear or some tire concern of some kind or other.

Celeste will be particularly disappointed to have missed him, for she is unusually enthusiastic about him. But being in New Orleans, as he pointed out, he will be able to get up this way often. Sometime I must take time out to analyse my own feelings regarding the young gentleman, for he is undoubtedly very pleasant, but.....and it may stem from the phobically harmless interest on his part during his first visit to Melrose. Being alone in this house, he discovered my Reading Machine, the like of which was entirely new to him. He accordingly investigated the object and forthwith was playing the thing madly. I was frankly surprised on returning here from the big house to hear the voice of Mr. Scourby going full tilt. Being dumb about mechanical things, not to say hesitant about fiddling with other people's electrical gadgets, I possibly tended to resent his interest more than the insignificant circumstance warranted. Subsequent tendencies to investigate things manifested themselves, and I gasped a little today when he felt the impulse to open our new bookcase and pick up and examine a perfectly lovely blue and white square Wedgewood box. I treasure that particular Wedgewood item particularly and I keep it under glass where it is safe and yet where I can see it daily. I hope I haven't grown so touchy of late that people can't unlock my bookcase and examine things in it, and yet I wish people would leave my Wedgewood alone.

3253-B

And so Mr. Cunningham will be able to drop by this way for frequent week ends, and I think it will be lovely for Celeste to entertain him, and in that way everyone will be perfectly enchanted with the whole arrangement.

You will find Nellie Wailes Brandon her same delightful self in the enclosed letter. I had written her rather confidentially last week, giving her some concept of the local set up and a brief account of the Hogan-Moore fiasco. I suggested she destroy the letter on reading, knowing it to be her custom to share my letters sometimes with Mary Rhodes. Always loyal to her friends, her explanation of Mrs. Moore's inability to write during the past year is a noble gesture in her friend's behalf, - if not particularly convincing. Her reference to my vocal abilities has to do with my reference to the paragraph in her recent communication, wherein she mentioned her vision seemed to be playing out on her. In making my response, I felt impelled to attempt consolation, which would have been genuine, but instead, since she had referred to my problem, I took the opposite tack, toying with the idea that she and I might eventually compare notes, obtain a tin cup and a guitar somehow or other, and while she plucked on the strings, I might sing a bit and pass the cup.

It seems ever so odd to me that she, a Natchez historian and fervent Episcopalian, should never have heard of Richard Dana's brother. But somehow Fate seems to play tricks that way, what with Richard, being somewhat on the dull side, should have had miles of newspaper notariety, whereas his brother, much the more gifted of the two, should have lived mysteriously and died without a local obituary. Perhaps one of the nice things about going to Heaven might be the chance that once there, one might ask to see technicolor films of a heap of shadowy people who in life we knew only by their names on tombstones. I certainly should like to have an opportunity to view Richard's brother's life on his remote West Indian plantation. For I am under the impression it might be a heap more colorful than most of the humdrum doings of Richard in his castle of Goats.

It has been deep night for over three hours now, and neither the cook nor my secretary have shown up. I hope they weren't knocked out by falling pecanes or buried under the avalanche from the orchards. Eventually I must scurry over to the kitchen and round up a bite to eat and then spend an hour or so with Mr. Franklin in Passy before contacting John Daily or whoever will be broadcasting to the world that Mr. Dewey has today been elected as President by the American electorate.....

Peuland 10/18

3254

Wednesday, November 3rd, 1948.

Memorandum: I had better not send Mr. Truman a message, reading: "I know just how you feel", but rather address myself to Mr. Dewey, with the simple inquiry: "What struck us."

Well, in view of what happened at the polls yesterday, I had better not send Mr. Truman a message, reading: "I know just how you feel", but rather address myself to Mr. Dewey, with the simple inquiry: "What struck us."

Having little enthusiasm for either candidate, I felt the people weren't given much of a choice. Surely the 80th Congress was bad, and it is good to know the reactionary leaders of that body have lost their strangle hold on liberal policies. Frankly, some 24 hours back, I was under the impression that much of F. D. R.'s desirable policies would be wrecked by a sweeping success by Mr. Dewey and an ultra conservative legislative branch. As the final results of the election come to hand, however, it appears the people of the United States have cast their votes in favor of liberalism and the policies of F. D. R., and while the more liberal Congress will probably not permit those policies to be scuttled entirely, - as would have probably been likely in some degree, had Congress turned out to be staunchly Republican, now all we have to worry about is that the President after January 20th may not so bungle things as to get us off into a bog through ineffectual executive administrative policy.

Of all the news commentators and radio prognosticators, none ever seemed to dream Mr. Truman would carry any States to speak of, but day before yesterday came a brief note from Joe Henry, saying only this: "Don't be surprised if Truman wins", which seemed silly enough a couple of days back, and even yet doesn't quite make sense.

What with hill billies in the voting ascendancy in these parts, it is but natural the States Rights party should have carried Louisiana and Mississippi. This will surely go down in history as one of the strangest elections on record.

Our visitors today were on the social side. Mrs. Rand came for lunch, and the Mill Hinton's came later in the day. It was good to see them both, but not being especially communicative, I had but a limited sitting with both. I think Billy Hinton, who brought his wife and two children with him, possibly had in

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mind to stay with Celeste for a few days, but Celeste isn't back from South Louisiana yet, and so the altered their plans accordingly.

I have done a little more reading of "round destiny, and find it unfailingly excellent. I notice the Austrian Ambassador is invariably spoken of as Mercy, which seems a little odd to me since I always thought of him as Mercy Argenteau. Did I ever mention his passport from France to England, issued during the Revolution. I somehow lost the thing somewhere or other years ago, but have always been hoping I would re-discover it. I thought it such an elegant document, and so grand manner in tone, for it was made out to the Austrian Ambassador, "Mercy Argenteau "et sa suite", which, I suppose, covered a whole raft of people as well as the person of the Ambassador himself.

My activities in town today weren't so extensive as I had supposed necessary for this sitting. There were six or eight items, upper and lower, needing attention but that was all for this sitting. I shall have another go-round next week, just to balance the thing up on the opposite side. The weather was elegant and everyone so kind that the whole business at hand didn't seem half bad, although I shall have to be dipping into codine shortly to allay the after effects.

I was surprised to have a line from Fennland again so soon. You will be interested in the lady's plans. She certainly is heading for the right place in view of her interest in handicraft. I believe Iceland is the only other place she might do well to explore the weaving department, for they really have wonderful things there, it is said, for those who have sense enough to appreciate such things, which I do not.

The pecanes continue to roll from the field into the "pecane fort" and about 30,000 pounds were garnered today, it is said. Apparently Mr. Pachelier's prediction as to the size of the crop was well founded. It is estimated that a couple more weeks will see the harvest completed, and assuming the average day's gathering averages from 20,000 to 25,000 pounds, there ought to be quite an imposing total.

With the possible exception of an occasional scattered no-account couple of trees, there are no pecanes on Magnolia, and none in the Bermuda area to speak of, which seems a little odd, but I guess the "ertzogs and the "rudhommes are still concentrating on cotton exclusively, although one would think they might get reckless now and then and just stick a pecane in the ground just to see what would happen.

I may have written duller letters, but off hand, I don't recall anything so calculated to put one to sleep, which I shall try on myself forthwith.....

Ruby Goodwin
re: Negro

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Thursday, November 4th, 1948.

Memorandum:

May I tell you that tucked away safely in my armoire is a registered letter, arriving in today's post, the holding of which until the morrow will guarantee me a night of pleasant dreams in anticipation of a happier dawn.

A high wind, warm and humid, has been blowing all day, scattering pecanes all over the place. Mr. Brew was heading toward town before 4 o'clock this morning to gather up town harvesters brought to Melrose by first day. All day he has been in the Little River area, not coming back to Melrose for dinner, and after the daily accounts have been settled with the town pickers, he will haul them to Matchitoches, so that he will never make it to see me before tomorrow when he says he is going to take the day off to do nothing, by way of a change. That will be to our advantage, since by his presence our communication system will be re-established.

There has been quite a few letters from various quarters of late, and I had Mrs. Rand lend me a hand on some of them, - such as the enclosed, but, as you know, our correspondence is always reserved for the most confidential of secretaries.

My Reading Machine selected Wednesday to start kicking over the traces, - at about the time I should welcome its services most. I think there is nothing particularly out of gear with the thing, possibly it needs a new tube or perhaps merely oiling. In any event, the revolving table suddenly decided it didn't want to revolve any more, and my literary evening came to an abrupt halt.

Accordingly I talked with Mr. Aycock of the Baton Rouge office this morning. He was as cordial as usual and said that while machines were a little difficult to lay hands upon at a moment's notice, he felt assured he could round one up in a jiffy. He says there is a departmental ruling that a machine out of kilter must be in the hands of the home office before a new one is sent out, but that he felt

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the cutting of a little red tape would be an excellent idea in the present case and that he would see to it that I got a new one promptly, and that I needn't worry about the time element elapsing before the one I have at Melrose reaches him in Baton Rouge. I mentioned that I was expecting "ssae Mae" this week end. Perhaps he will send it by her. Perhaps he will drive up with one himself, for he promised to drop in on me one of these days, and his advent will be a great pleasure, for he is an excellent person.

The enclosure is from that colored lady recommended by little Miss Lota Blythe. Her remarks on Rosenwald are interesting. I shall respond by relating to her the case of Barnett "ane" who received grants in two successive years for a book on the negro in the Reconstruction period, - the writing of which he confessed to me he was never dreaming of undertaking, but the mere promise to do so had netted him a four thousand dollar grant, and that was all he wanted, - and at the very time he was teaching at Loyola, doing special features for the New Orleans Item, and enjoying the royalties of his Louisiana Hayride. Like little Miss Ruby, I never have quite figured out on what basis awards by Rosenwald are granted. Perhaps they just put the names of all applicants on a set of separate slips of paper, drawing the slips at random from the hat, which would seem a little hap-hazard, but in the end with as fair a distribution, perhaps as what has gone before.

In Herr Feuchtwanger's discussion of the Little Trignon, I at first thought he was talking exclusively about the village, but later I gathered he was also talking about the Petit Trignon itself, and I grew a little confused in his historical references. Of course the Petit Trignon was built by Mme. de Pompadour, and as the author mentions in one place, was occupied for a time by Mme. Dubarry. And yet there seems to me to be an impression the Queen invited her guests to inspect her new Trignon first, - on the King's birthday, and after that, to inspect the village, which confuses me. There was always something about the Trignon that puzzled me a little and made me think some alteration had taken place there following the death of Mme. de Pompadour. I am thinking of the side of the building facing the village, which seems to me inordinately plain and utterly lacking in the interesting classicism of the other three sides of the building. I have always puzzled on this matter, and can't imagine why I never discussed the point with Marechal-Beaupre. I think I shall write to him sometime and ask him if he can set me straight. I believe the original plans are extant, and this would settle the point with dispatch.

Well, Ltd, how fast this note ran out, and how happy will be the morrow when I unlock my armoire and so hand you my ear.....

Audley Conner
Natchez
11/1 3258

Friday, November 5th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Thirty million peans of thanksgiving would not begin to indicate the pleasure which awaited me today on opening my armoire and its most precious content.

For one as sensitive as your own good self, you automatically felt tremors radiating from Yucca and from Arenbourg whose birthday is again being celebrated so soon.

Thus we head into the annual planting season with every promise of all kinds of fruits, shrubs and flowers on the agenda. And in passing, I must remark the smile of satisfaction passing over my face when in reading of the original fete given at Trignon by the Queen, it was pointed out that in an about the Hameau, one discovered a concentration of trees and shrubs of various types, but plentitudes of fruit trees, too. Frankly I hadn't thought about pears and persimons about the original "maison de la reine", but it seems we move toward historic duplications without even realizing it in advance.

But I am ever so sorry that you had to have a session at your dentists at the same time I was entering upon my little visitations. Somehow in New York particularly, there always seemed to be a tendency to make the patient call a million times to accomplish a single undertaking, and that always wore me down. I hope it is not so in your present problem and that the whole business is over by now and that it has entailed a minimum of torture.

Aside from a mild swelling on my face, unnoticed by anyone, my present undertaking gets practically no sympathy since the effects of the dredge is not apparent, "when coming at you", as Clemence always explains when referring to a front face view. I hope a similar bit of good fortune was present in your present circumstance, too, for somehow the rest of the thing seems so much more easily managed when a veil or fan isn't required for constant use to avoid frightening the unsuspecting.

I am a little floored that you should again be honored so soon by the little number from Venezuela. How is it that those people never seem to stay put. Poor you! with never a night free, and forever searching for a quiet evening at home with your books and papers. If only I might share some of my quiet evening alone. I sometimes laugh in my beard when people, out of sheer sympathy, contrive to arrange something

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so I can get out in the evening, and never can I convince them that in reality I prefer to remain at home. When I lived in the metropolitan area, I always disliked going to the barber because it seemed to take up so much time, whereas I suppose I might fritter away just as much or more at home doing nothing. And the same sensation persists to this day, for even when I have nothing particular on hand at home, I somehow resent the very rare consent I give to Celeste to grace one of her exceedingly dull parties where she and everyone appears so happy to think I am being afforded an evening in society while secretly I am begrudging every second I am whirling around in the squirrel's cage.

Of local news, I haven't much. Three tornadoes stormed about the State last night, it is said, but none of them very close by. One between here and Alexandria picked up a galvanized iron structure and calmped it down on some high tension wires, but other wise did little more than frighten people. Others between here and Hatcher were made homeless and a few killed, but while we had had brisk winds all day, I never heard any that were not out of line with ordinary gusts.

And speaking of Hatcher, you will find the enclosed letter more interesting as an official account of some 1948 aspects of life in Adams County than anything else. I didn't know before that my friend had been selected Mayor. Wasn't it gave of him to invite me over for January 3rd and to promise me a Key to the City. I have long thought American municipalities were loosing a big opportunity in not actually presenting the far famed symbolic keys they are forever taking about but never trotting out. Sometime I may suggest to the new Mayor that he actually have some cast with a view to presenting them to distinguished visitors, especially at Pilgrimage time. I suppose the enclosure might be quite interesting a century hence, just as you and I would enjoy turning through one of like complexion dated 1848.

On Melrose, the pecanes continue to roll, and I am told the 200,000 pound figure has already been exceeded. J. H. has such a cold one can scarcely hear him speak, but that doesn't slow him up any, and he flies to Washington, D. C. on business Sunday night and returns here on Tuesday morning. Just another great big Venezuelan.

There is a nice new moon tonight, but I think perhaps I would do well not to go out in the somewhat rampant atmosphere, but I should ever so much like to stroll over to Arenbourg, and commune a little with it, the stars and you, as to its birth day, and plans for the morrow. Your letter made me so happy.....

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Dona 11/1

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Sunday, November 7th, 1948.

Memorandum:

I begin our little chat well after 9 p.m.

It has been a busy day, so brace yourself against an unusually dull epistle.

The Joe Henrys came over from Beaumont unexpectedly for the week end. This morning, before I had finished with some of my colored friends who come to see me every Sunday morning, Juanita Henry, (Mrs. Joe) came over for some ideas. She is studying for a Master's or a Doctor's degree and is writing a thesis based on the lines from that good old American document, reading: "All men are created equal", which she proposes to use as a basis for giving thought to the inequality of youngsters starting off in their early grades in school.

I gave her a flock of suggestions but before we had progressed very far, the Worsleys, husband and wife, some Major in the air force and some lady from someplace or other came. Eventually we got rid of them and back to our business, when Celeste summoned Juanita for cocktails. I was summoned, too, but demurred.

For the cook has just run in to tell me she couldn't finish preparing dinner for her papa, Bud Williams, had just died.

But Aurelia took over the pot and pan department and things went along smoothly. Just after dinner, the Joe Evanses of Ferriday, came. Before they had gone, - it was perhaps 3 o'clock, Rugabou and Ezra came to see me. It seems the Williams family had been so busy hooping and hollerin' over Bud's passing, that they had forgotten to advise the Health authorities or to summon an undertaker. Would I. I would.

And that brought up something that pleased me much. When I asked which undertaker they wished me to summon, they asked me to call Dr. Johnson, the "atchitoches negro doctor. But since the former patient of Dr. Johnson was dead, I thought it a bit late to telephone for any physician. But, as they explained, Dr. Johnson's wife is a lady undertaker, and it was really the lady undertaker they wanted me to talk with for them. Can't you just picture a Moliere comedy when the business of the lady undertaker gets dull, and she makes some pertinent suggestions to her physician husband to drum up a little trade in her behalf.....

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Well, with that out of the way, I sat with my patient for a bit, and we decided it would be nice to have our supper early before any other visitors might pass this way. But before we had moved in that direction, Dr. and Mrs. (Woodruff and Jerry) McCook arrived, and before they left, John Cochran of Minden, La. As they started out, Joe and Ette Levy from Natchitoches made their bows, - and so the day sun along.

Essae Mae, Lois and Helen arrived about six, and the Madam, having already folded up, she left the entertaining to me for the balance of the day, and so the ladies came over to Yucca for a sitting and a sip of wine. After that came supper, and here we are at long last, - you and I, and I'm glad the day is finished.

After Joe and Juanita left at noon, the Madam and I were the only white folks on the place. Dan is in New Orleans and J. A. is heading for Washington. Joe told me that J. A. is going there for a round with the Rural Electrification Bureau, for J. A., as Chairman of the local R. E. A. is expecting to bring home five million dollars for the establishment of a further development of Rural Electrification in this area.

Jerry McCook told me a gay story from the Natchitoches area, based on the recent appearance of what is said to be a decidedly sexy account of life in James Aswell's new novel, *Mid Summer Fires*. It seems that a well known maiden lady of advanced years was going along the road on the outskirts of Natchitoches the other day when Mr. Aswell, driving in the same direction in his car, and stopping, asked the old maid, whom he has known for ever so long, if he might carry her a ways.

The old maid took one good look at the author, and then, drawing herself up to her full height, declared: "Definitely not, Mr. Aswell. I have just read your book, and by means of its pages you have already carried me much further than I have ever cared to go."

Whereupon the fulminating maiden turned and flounced off leaving James well snubbed, as she thought, and in possession of pretty good paragraph for his next book review, as she probably never suspected.

So plays out the day, not a radio program following the 6 a.m. weather report, not a turn of the revolving disk of the Reading Machine. How whole heartedly I sympathize for you in your desire to have a quiet Sunday at home alone....

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0336

Monday, November 8th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Mya I tell you that tucked away in my armoire, awaiting the morrow, is a nice little number the postman handed me today.

My secretary is far afield, I am told, somewhere off in the Red River district, and possibly he is still engaged in hauling pecaness or people at this hour of 9, so I reckon I shall not see him before tomorrow. In the mean time, I am guaranteed a happy day on awakening.

As Mr. Papy's would have expressed it "the ladies lay long", and actually weren't in circulation until nearly 10 this morning. They chatted a few minutes with the Adam and me, and then hurriedly took off from for Monroe, La., and Heaven knows where else. As the time element in their arrival at and departure from Calrose was so brief, they threaten to come back this way within ten days if their schedule permits. So it be it, - or not, since this particular November is one in which I don't feel too much inclined toward the social side of life.

And speaking of life, let me mention a letter Celeste read me yesterday about an autopsy. It was from Dr. Ambrose Hertzog, Miss Sally's son, who presides over the Pathology Department at Tulane. He wrote Celeste that old Dr. Attas telephoned him the other day about his grief in the death of his cat. He had asked a veterinarian's opinion as to the cause of his pet's death, and the veterinarian had pronounced it heart trouble, - always a safe statement in death, it seems to me.

But Dr. Attas felt that it had died from a throat or lung difficulty, and accordingly ask Dr. Hertzog if he would be so good as to perform an autopsy. Dr. Hertzog would.

And so Dr. Attas rolled up to Tulane in his fine limousine shortly thereafter, bearing his little white cat on his knee, all beautifully laid out in a little pale blue coffin.

Dr. Hertzog invited the ancient physician if he would care to assist him, - or "sit in" on the autopsy, but the

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grief stricken owner, of course declined.

And that's all there is to the story, save that Dr. Hertzog found that in reality the cat had died of a heart ailment, and returning the remains to the little pale blue coffin, he handed them back to Dr. Mattas who drove away dejected in spirits but apparently satisfied in knowing exactly which organ of his pet had failed.

Dr. Mattas is a sweet old man and among his New Orleans friends are the Theodore Grunewalds. Mrs. Grunewald (Cousin Josephine) wrote me a note the other day, asking if it would be alright to bring Dr. Mattas to Melrose where she says he would like to spend some time with me discussing ante bellum treatment of ailing slaves with me, as someone told him I had done a little research in the "atchez area on that subject. Perhaps I had better give some special attention to my cats before he comes, and probably it will be just as well if I don't mention the one at the bottom of the 650 foot well.

The pecanes continue to roll, although quite a few stalwart youths and maidens today used the death of Bud Williams yesterday as an excuse for "mourning" today, in anticipation of tonight's wake and tomorrow's funeral, and the "mourning" seems to consist primarily of lolling about the store gallery and frolicking up and down the road. Ezra, who always is working, took ten minutes off this afternoon, to drop by to say howdy. On Friday night, he told me, he weighed 33,000 pounds of the darned things in 100 pound sacks, after which he went with his wife to a little party in town. He said he nearly fell out when on arriving, his host passed him a dish, asking him if he would care to try a pecane or two.

I saw Celeste this morning when the ladies were pulling out for Monroe, and she told me today is the lady doctor's birthday and that they were planning a little surprise for her tonight, and wouldn't I like to honor the celebrant by my presence. I wouldn't.

And so, with these few lines, I shall fold up forthwith. Frankly my head feels as fat and as hollow as a pumpkin, and under such circumstances, there are few things so appealing as a downy couch and a codine tablet.

And it's going to be nice awakening in the morning, and casting my first glance of the day in the general direction of my armoir.....

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Tuesday, November 9th, 1948.

Memorandum:

How pleasant it is to come to this hour at the end of the day, even when as at present, I haven't anything in particular to say, yet consumed with eagerness to commune for a little while with you.

In the shivering bamboo hedge this morning, I heard for the first time this season the cheery whistle of the White Throated sparrow, back to his winter home on Cane River from the far tundras of the Canadian wilds. Before dawn the thermometer began dropping alarmingly, 10 degrees within half an hour. Great blue-black clouds rolled out of the North West, and radio weather casters from Oklahoma and Texas reported whirling snows. They promised us an all day rain, which never materialized, although a soggy mist, soaking everything save the earth which needed it, prevailed.

Around noon, what with the dour weather and the promise of the funeral of Bud Williams in the graveyard of St. Augustine's on Little River, the whole plantation dropped everything, and vanished. I am hoping my slightly wayward secretary didn't fall into the grave. In any event, as I pen these lines at 9 p.m., he hasn't as yet put in an appearance, and my treasure of yesterday remains locked safely in my armoir, - awaiting another morrow.

But, what with one thing and another, not to mention the weather, I found a little time this evening to finish the Feuchwangler opus, which, as I discovered at the end, has born two titles, - "Proud Destiny" and "Arms For America", - neither of which quite cover the book properly, I think.

It will be a pleasure to have Mr. Scurby read the volume again, - to us both, for his is an elegant performance, and much of the material deserves discussion and elaboration.

It seems to me the author has been most successful with his portraits of Franklin and Beaumarchais. He was not so successful, to my way of thinking, with Marie Antoinette, for by omitting any reference at all to many of her more sedate friends, for example, Louis XVI's saintly sister, Madame Elizabeth, the impression is created that most of her friends were of little or no account, and that she was more or less bereft of really disinterested

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admirers, such as Count Fersen, for example, whose name, also, I failed to discover.

It must be admitted that my edition, at least, is styled a novel. That statement, of course, permits the author, - in this case, a splendid one, - to take any poetic license he cares to, I suppose. And yet millions of readers of this novel will base much of their concept of 18th century characters of France, not on other histories they may read, but on this entertaining novel. After all, Feuchwangler went to some pains to indicate that the Marriage of Figaro was considerably more than a mere comedy. By the same token, he might well suspect that "Proud Destiny" is more than a novel.

His research has unquestionably been so splendid that I found myself quite up a tree, so to speak, when reaching the final page, where the King, from his library, looks down from the windows of his library into the courtyard where he sees Dr. Franklin descending the snow covered staircase to his coach. Where in the world could have been this staircase. Or is this staircase merely a bit of the novel. You may recall that the King's library is situated about mid way between the very center of the chateau and the Chapel, to its right, as one faces the building from the court yard. From the King's library window one can easily glance across the courtyard, but where one might find a staircase, I can't imagine, for all the staircases are enclosed at Versailles, save those two gigantic ones on the garden side by the Orangery, which couldn't possibly been seen from either the library or anywhere else on the remote wings in the neighborhood of the Chapel. I have studied the building as it stood under the XIVth Louis, and under the XV's Louis when some of the courtyard features were altered, but in neither reign was there an outside staircase, and I can't imagine why I am making such a fuss about it, except that coming in the final scene, this fantasy perhaps reminded me of a youthful art exhibit I once viewed in a Philadelphia wherein a child, swept away by historical enthusiasm, had painted a portrait of George Washington in action in Philadelphia, - stepping onto, - of all things, - a Chestnut Street trolley car. It was charming, unimportant and mildly surprising. And so is Mr. Feuchwangler's final courtyard staircase.

On the home front, I am glad to report that my patient, although just as frail, is in a happy frame of mind. But next door, things are different. Following her jaunt to South Louisiana, madam Regard is flattened out, suffering no pain, albeit, thanks to liberal doses of morphine. So turns the world on this particular axis....

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Wednesday, November 10th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Perhaps first off, I should remark that it is possible this letter may arrive a day late, since I must go to town early in the morning, and may not get back in time to post it before the out-going mail has departed. As you perhaps noted in yesterday's Memorandum, I am using small envelopes for the moment, the regular ones having temporarily play out.

And next, I might quote that old line:

"Patience on a tombstone, smiling at Grief."

From where I sit, it would appear that my secretary, usually so regular, is passing through one of those occasional digressions, so characteristic at harvest time, of getting way off the beam. It affords me the greatest satisfaction to have your promise of felicity in the form of a letter awaiting me in my armoire, but now I have reached the point I really want to let the pleasure of anticipation give way to perusal, and if Mr. Brew doesn't make a round on the morrow, I shall have to employ the services of another.

The Rands came today, and I missed them both. Dr. Rand came to Yucca around 1 o'clock while I was at Arenbourg, and Mrs. Rand passed by "elrose at 4, while I was contending at home with my beard. She left me some elegant little apple pies she had baked for me, thinking their consistency would be easily managed under present circumstances. I ate one for my supper and found it grand. She is really remarkably thoughtful and constant in making her rounds, and I must drop her a note tonight without fail.

I unwittingly did quite right in reading Mr. Feuchwangler's Paris portraits prior to having a go at the Adams family, for the capable, busy little John Adams, forever suffering from a persecution complex, as depicted in Proud Destiny, steps forth very true to that portrayal in the fuller length study by James T. Adams in his excellent book.

It has been several years since I last read The Adams Family, and I am ever so delighted to notice how much fuller the book has grown through my own ability to appreciate many of its points the better, thanks to the study that has gone in to

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the intervening years.

In reality, the author is not attempting to present exhaustive biographies of the Adams tribe from John to Henry, but rather to describe the phenomenon, - without attempting to explain, the strange thing that happened all of a sudden in the progression of the tribe, when, beginning with John, they suddenly emerged as characters and mentalities of unusual merit, maintaining those outstanding qualities from generation to generation for more than a century and three quarters. The author speculates on why it was that none of the Adamses prior to John, had ever been other than "the run of the mill", -- the family had been in America for three generations before old John made his bow. And the author further remarks that while there were plenty of other men of character and intellect associated with old John in his time, none of those outstanding men succeeded in begetting children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and so on, who made any stir at all in the succeeding generations that could be mentioned along side the ever blooming Adams generations. And perhaps it is just as well, for what in the world would we have done, if we had been possessed of whole generations of Jeffersons, Franklins, Washingtons and so on. One such phenomenon is certainly to be prized, but perhaps one is just enough.

Yesterday's mists gave way to full sunshine today, but a chill wind kept the thermometer in the 50's, and under tonight's brilliant moon, the readings will drop to the low 30's, the weather man says. Pecaness continue to roll, but at the moment, at least, they seem to come to a halt at the "Pecane Fort", which is becoming quite "wedged out", what with the market apparently glutted, and no buyers nibbling at current budding stocks.

Today I heard something mildly odd that happened a week or two before the late Bud Williams passed out. It seems that Fugabon's mama, - my secretary's grandmother, - had been making quite a long trip at the close of each day, to sit up for a few hours with the ailing man. Mary Randolph is frail to begin with, and always a panic to end up with, and in proof thereof, after she had faithfully maintained her nightly vigil for a fortnight, somewhat startled old Bud one evening, by announcing on her arrival: "Now see here, Mr. Budd, I ain't minded a-comin' to sit up with you night after night if you is really so sick you're going to die, but if you ain't goin' to make up your mind by this week end come Saturday, then I'll be a-goin' to stay myself at home." And old Budd must have taken her at her word, for on Sunday noon he passed on.

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Thursday, November 11th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Lights are still shining from the "Pecane Fort", so I take it my secretary is still engaged in his labors, but I shall not await his advent before starting this note.

As a matter of fact, this morning was rather rugged, and I think I may fold up a little earlier than is my custom.

Lights are going full tilt at Celeste's, too, for Madam Regard appears to be worse, and Paynie at the store tells me they have just sent to town for the lady doctor. Fortunately my patient seems to be doing pretty well, which is comforting when the rest of creation appears to be sagging in one spot or another.

You were recently so good as to give me a fine synopsis of "A Clouded Star", and if I haven't already thanked you for your thoughtfulness, may I touch upon that sentiment now. I never visited a Watkins Glem station on the Underground, although I can well imagine that place being on one of the main routes, and wonderfully well adapted for the type of hiding place you mentioned. I have long admired the beauty and remarkable geological formations at Watkins Glem, which, as a State Park, is splendidly maintained. The last time I was there I made the visit with the boy friend, possibly along about 1936, at a time when our course across Central New York State followed more or less closely along the route LaFayette had traveled during his tour which eventually took him on to Monticello and thence around to New Orleans and Natchez. I wished at the time I might have spent more time visiting the environs of Watkins, and the next time I find myself there, I am most certainly going to look up some oldsters to see if anyone can still remember where the "Clouded Star" may have stopped.

And from what you write, I gather that it was at Auburn and not Geneva that little Miss Tubman died. I don't know how I got mixed up on that point, save perhaps that each or both cities are respectively at the North end of adjoining Finger Lakes. I declare, Auburn has claims to an odd set of personalities, such as Mr. Lincoln's Secretary of State, William Seward, whose home it was, not to mention it as the site of good old Harriet's demise, and another, - and nothing to be proud of, - the home of the present Representative Tabor, or is it spelled Taber, who, as Chairman of the House Appropriation Committee during the last Congressional session, kept the pot boiling so madly.

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In another department of history and literature, you were of course as delighted as I to learn of the discovery of the papers of Boswell, so long thought lost.

Some newspaper commentator, perhaps Herr Kaltenborn, dished out the only particulars coming to my attention, although I have no doubt that the Picayune must have carried an account of the discovery and an enumeration of the individual subjects appearing in this extensive group. Among other things, if I understand correctly, is Boswell's Journal for the year covering his first meeting with Dr. Johnston, etc. That really ought to make good reading.

I suppose Boswell's Life of Johnson is probably about the finest biography in the English language. But I sometimes regret that like El Greco doing a splendid but not altogether pleasant portrait of some old Spanish cardinal, it seems a pity that Boswell didn't choose a subject, - the 18th century was so full of them, that might have been rather more pleasing if not quite so original.

But be that as it may, Boswell really knew how to compose his pictures and how to inject a maximum of vitality in every episode he selected in bringing out the personality of his man, and I am sure these new papers, just come to light, are going to embrace many particulars that will be helpful when new editions of old Boswell works are re-issued, and possibly some of the papers, - such as a portion of the diary, might merit a printing all by itself.

What with physical and social matters so much to the fore during the past couple of weeks, I seem to be way behind in my contacts in human association and in links fashioned by the pen. J. H. has been back from Washington for several days, but I haven't seen him as yet, and I am under the impression I may owe a letter or two to Miss Nellie, Dora and so on.

But by the end of the month, things will have become adjusted to the usual routine again, I hope, and as soon as the major gardening activities are under control, everything will be functioning more normally. Tonight's weather forecast promises a few drizzles for Friday and Saturday, - I hope, - for that will mean preparations may accordingly be made for placing the persimmons, crepe myrtles, etc., at Arenbourg. In the mean time, I have dug a big old pit by my front gallery, where I can earth in the newly arriving items, and after covering them, turn the hose of them, thus giving them a good breathing spell until their individual sites at Arenbourg, following a real rain, are ready for them. So many things to do, so many things to talk about, - how short 24 hours seems to be...

Cammie 3270
11/10

173E

Friday, November 12th, 1946.

Memorandum:

How nice to be in close touch with you again, for I have read your letter of the 3rd with infinite satisfaction, and hasten to thank you for the kind sentiments you so generously enclosed for me. I never cease to marvel how much stamina can be compressed in a single letter, and how girded are one's loins for any and every battle when the assurance is ever presence immediately at one's side when difficult things are confronting one. A million thanks for all your message has brought me.

As a matter of fact, my wandering secretary showed up this morning, looking like something just back from the wars. It seems that yesterday a pecan limb he was shaking at the top of the tree broke, skinning one leg ever so badly and apparently doing something to his ribs. He consulted the lady doctor in the afternoon, and she took him to the hospital for \$20.00 worth of X rays, which proved there were no broken bones. All that excitement certainly accounted in full for his absence on Thursday, but except for the wake and funeral on Monday and Tuesday, and general meanderings abroad on Wednesday must be charged off to the expanding orbit which takes all of them out of sight and reach every once in a while.

I was so glad to have the glimpses of election day in Manhattan, and the reactions in the aftermath, which made me chuckle with glee. I can imagine you keeping your face straight, but it must have been accomplished only by heroic self-control.

If those South American numbers will ever be done with their visitations, and the consequent slackening of the social, shopping and enervation departments, I shall most certainly be thankful for your sake. Off hand, it would seem to me that the shopping department always calls for a large slice of your time and energy. If you could only make some arrangement whereby you could undertake the shopping in return for freedom from all the social engagements, you might strike some kind of a balance that would still be much in favor of the party of the second part, but would, nevertheless, off some recompense for you in being able to skip a heap of the five cent cigar powwows.

3271

I had a telephone from my dentist this morning, asking me to have a care about getting damp and cold today, for the day began with a chill breeze and a heavy mist, which soaked one quickly enough but let down no water for out little friends at Arenbourg. It was nice of the man to think of me to that extent, however, and I followed his instructions generally speaking. I have discovered that codine inclines to mauseate one, and so when the physical occasion seems to demand that something be done, I swallow a couple of wine glasses full of port, which appears to attend to the most pressing need, and eventually stimulates a good appetite which, I suppose, is something to cultivate under the circumstances. By the time I get read for another go-round, I ought to have my schedule pretty well worked out.

On my way home from the telephone, I stopped to inquire after Madam Regard. She appears to be better, - to the extent Madam Egon felt she could afford to weep on my shoulder because of the difficulties confronting her. It seems she has a card game on for either the afternoon or the night, and then, besides all that, her husband is so busy, he has little time for her, and so you can see how difficult life can be. So much in life is comparative, so little is absolute, I sometimes wonder what would happen if one could keep on playing cards for a week at a stretch without stopping, and have all the pickles properly chilled, the sandwiches all properly cut, the clothes perfectly suited for the occasion and so on and so forth. That would be Heaven, I suppose, and poor Madam Ego can weep for it instead of sighing now and then and having the courage to hope for a slice of realization here on earth from time to time.

What with the weather being not too pleasant, the number of pilgrims of late has dropped appreciably. Today's chief visitors were from San Antonio, and as they arrived shortly before dinner, - 11:30, - I directed their attention exclusively to the big house and invited them for lunch, which seemed to please them, and apparently they never sensed they had missed seeing the African House, Yucca and the rest.

Pecanes continue to roll, and what with all the activity going on, I seem to see less of my local friends, which is momentarily just as well. I am also having difficulty in getting my shipped, what with all hands being at the pump, so to speak, and everything at the moment expressed in terms of thousands of pounds and truck loads. Eventually I hope I shall have some success, but please don't be too disappointed if any fail to come through, what with all the hurly-burly going on at present.....

RD 11/10/48
3272

Sunday, November 14th, 1948.

Memorandum:

How nice to have your elegant letter of Monday, so full of so many interesting details, in Saturday's post.

My secretary came on Saturday noon instead of working, but before he had finished reading it, - we had arrived at the Fred Allen which I did not hear, - he was sent for to assist in some mechanical business, and Sunday's schedule called for him to visit the lady doctor again, and so he may or may not return tonight. However that may be, I have the pleasure of reading the last page either before midnight tonight or on the morrow.

The taking off, - or its failure, was a mess, - I mean the trans-Atlantic plane, but at least there is a breathing space, I hope, for you, until it returns. On the back of Melrose, in the Red River neighborhood, there is an old cabin built on top of a prehistoric Indian mound, and in that house when the Madam first came to Melrose lived a negro, one Charlie Taylor, and the name of Charlie Taylor lives on down through the mid 1900's, even though Charlie has been dead these many yrs. Whenever we feel like we would like to get away from all the world's hurly-burly, and particularly the threat of impending visits from not too welcomed guests, the Madam and I always say to each other: "Hurry up, now, for before night catches up with us, we ought to head out for Charlie Taylor's." For that means a situation so remote that no one would ever catch up with us there, and I thought of it so often as I read your letter, wishing you might have a Charlie Taylor's to visit when South American and European planes get to buzzing around too madly.

After dint of much fiddling, I have succeeded in getting my Reading Machine to function a little, although the voice recording as currently read sounds a little like Donald Duck, but it does afford food for thought until a new machine has arrived. As a matter of fact, - since the new one has not come, I have a feeling that perhaps Mr. Aycock may be fixing to bring a new one up from Baton Rouge for me, - I hope.

And how nice of you to go to all the trouble to consult Baedker concerning Etoiles situation. What it should have been beyond Senart forest and in the general direction of Sceaux fills me with much pleasure, for that is the ground we have to explore eventually with a fine tooth comb. Good old Sceaux, and just to think that although it was the home of the Duke de Penthièvre or Toulouse and his daughter in law, the Princessse de Lambelle, the latter got but a single line in Proud Destiny, although both grand personalities must have been on friendly terms with Lenorma d'etboles.

3273

Naturally, there has been much talk today of the death of Mark Bradford. Although the Picaune doesn't do much by way of reviewing certain Louisiana writers, it accorded Brad a likeness on the front page and a couple of columns, - possibly more because he had once been on the paper as its Editor than because of his literary achievements.

His passing, however, brings up that old question which is forever puzzling me: why the radio net works go into such minute details about the cost of a bowl of rice in some remote Chinese province or what may be the guess as to the next wrinkle in the Berlin air lift, but fail to report the passing of someone like Brad who was certainly a prominent figure in contemporary literature, and whose death, it seems to me, would interest about as many people, - if for no other reason than being something different from the rice bowl or the air lift. I realize that Saturday and Sunday news casts appear to be knocked about so that the average listener may be thoroughly puzzled as to where and when to adjust his dials in the widest variance from his custom of picking up news on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Still I did hear several Saturday night and a couple of Sunday morning news casts, but not a peep came forth from a New Orleans date line.

The Madam did some speculating as to what Mrs. Bradford would do, now that Brad has gone. Richard, who you remember, was Lyle's god son, is 16, and will undoubtedly be in school for a few years more. But I think Mary Rose will be pulling out of New Orleans pretty soon, for I think she squandered Brad's money recklessly, and I doubt if she will try to maintain their house in the old French Quarter. For a variety of reasons, but mostly because of Brad, their house was always full of people but no one could ever stand Mary Rose, and even little Miss Alberta who is pretty much indifferent to personalities, entertained some very definite anti-Mary Rose feelings. Poor Brad, he liked Melrose so much, but the vulgarity of his wife made it difficult for everyone, and most especially for him, when they journeyed to the country where the absence of crowds made her commonness stick out like a sore thumb. I only regret that it was Brad who had to go, if one had to, for Louisiana would always have been the nicer because of him, and there would have been but a sigh of relief all 'round, had it been Brad who was freed.

But to more pleasant things.....A week ago or more I intended speaking of a very delightful coincidence that occurred at the time I was all wrapped up in Proud Destiny. I had had a fairly busy day, piddling about doing all sorts of odds and ends, including the re-arrangement on the shelves of our library of a nice old leath bound 18th century edition of the Encyclopadia after which, more to relax than anything else, I read a single page from the reuchtwangler opus, which turned out to be none other than that section wherein Dr. Franklin is depicted arranging his fine new set of the Encyclopadia at Passy, both his and ours being of the same reign of Louis XVI. - and I liked it.....

3274

Monday, November 15th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Please make a mark on zee wall! For once I am not aching, and feeling as gay as a kitten, I have no intention of streaking across a couple of bridges two weeks hence when I'll be casting about for sympathy again.

All day, which was ever so warm and damp and dark, I kept turning over in my mind the extraordinary doings of some of the earlier dabblers in anesthesia, and the various ways they tried knocking themselves out, either completely or sectionally. But I was constantly thinking of them not because I was trying to knock myself out but rather trying to knock the anesthesia out, and after much trial and error, I succeeded which accounts for my momentary hilarity.

I didn't sleep so well last night and accordingly got up at 4:30, thinking to begin the day, - and I did, but not at all along accustomed lines.

First off, I fortified myself with a glass of wine and then thought I would figure out "how I got this way". First off, - and if this bores you, you can readily skip the balance of this page and miss nothing, - I figured that the dentist applied the anesthetics in a concentrated form to spread over a very limited area. Call that day Thursday. By Friday, the concentration had lost its intensity but like ink or oil staining wider but fainter circles on a cloth, so the anesthesia by Friday and Saturday had spread over about one half my head and all my throat. By Sunday the expansion had reached its limits and had begun contracting, with the receding pains seeming to concentrate not on the jaw, but in the temple, the ear or the throat. If I were smart, I would find some means other than nauseating codine to deaden the pain at that concentration. The first glass of wine helped much, a second was even more effective.

Then came breakfast and gradually the chocolate eradicated the good work of the alcohol. But later in the morning I went back to the wine, and after dinner, the Dark Duke passed by my house to share a drink of some fine vintage he had rounded up from somewhere, so that by supper time, I was really quite woozey. Then, after my patient had folded up, I cut

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myself out a fine slice of siesta, - about an hour's worth, and LO! - on awakening, - I discovered both the alcohol and the aftermath of the anesthesia, so far as this round goes, has been eliminated completely, - and so I sing my gay but endless song. Since anesthetics effects everyone differently, I assume it wouldn't be worth while to draw up a chart, - unless some average exists, but I certainly think dentists could ehlp out a lot if they would give a prospective victim a three minute pep talk on possible solutions. For one thing, in my own case, whenever in the future I hear of anyone heading in to such a problem, I am certainly going to tell him how I fared and what I did to pull myself out.

I was enchanted when my secretary passed by this evening so I could finish our little chat of Saturday. How nice of you to have thought of me regarding the Boswell papers, as recorded by the Times. Our letters on this interesting news had crossed. I think it well that you make quite sure you have sufficient copies to insure a complete record in your scrapbook, which is most important, but should you, after finishing that entry, discover that you should still have an extra copy, I should be ever so delighted to have one, - on the slim hope that some kind bird of passage, - perhaps someone like Miss Kate Perkins, passing this way, might read me some of the particulars. I shall keep the account within reach, and there is always a chance it may get lost, but if I know you have a complete account in the scrapbooks, then I shall not have the jitters, should some loutish person lift my copy, or s me Jimmy Cunningham cut it up to make paper dolls when I am not looking.

I am so glad I was able to spring forth from my alcoholic-anesthetic jag tonight in time to hear the Dupont program, presenting the brief ketch of Booker T. Washington's life. I thought it well done.

I haven't gotten around to look at last week's Life yet, but I notice a picture of Jeanne d'Arc on the cover, and from Hollywood I heard a most favorable review of a new film having to do with "la Pucelle d'Orleans", - the latter name always holding a faint suggestion of a smile in it for me, what with "pucelle" and ponce getting so close together somehow.

But what with all this chatter about me, I don't seem to have reported anything much about other personalities or performances on the plantation. Well, what with the weather being just right for our friends at Arenbourg, there really hasn't been so much going on. My secretary's uncle, one Eugabour, confided to me at the store this afternoon that he had just bought himself a fine new \$950.00 car, so cotton money is beginning to roll, I take it, and need for raising anothe crop is just in the offing. Thanks again for your nice letter and for all the elegant news bits you share with me.....

3276 ✓

Tuesday-Wednesday, November 16th-17th, 1948.

Mimorandum:

Merely a note to say the Madam fell in her room during the night.

Passing by a 2 a.m., to see if she was alright, I found her to be.

Passing by again an hour before dawn, I discovered she had fallen near her bed.

They had little hopes of her survival when they took her to the hospital as soon as the lady doctor and the ambulance could arrive.

All the Henrys are converging on the place today, and God alone knows what the day will unfold, - or the morrow.

You will forgive, - by understanding the reasons, for the brevity of this note.....

3277

Wednesday, November 17th, 1948.

Memorandum:

In the press you will have long since learned of Aunt Cammie's passing, but I mention it tonight, and feel I owe an apology for the brevity of the Memo that went forward in this morning's post.

Because of neuralgia last night, I broke my custom of penning a few lines. It had been a pleasant day, save for the pain, and I think I never saw my patient more sparkling. On retiring, she declared she was convinced that in spite of her infirmities, she would live to a million.

I flattened out myself about 5:30, hoping some anti-pain pills would work the more effectively, but at 8 p.m., I made a round to see that all was well. J. H. passed by at 11, and I made another round at 2. A little before daylight, I made another round, for the warmth of Tuesday evening was beginning to chill in the pre-dawn hours of this morning.

I found the poor bird on the floor unconscious. Picking her up, I got her back into bed and immediately called J. H. The doctor was immediately summoned and she was taken to the hospital without delay. She remained unconscious all day. All her children reached the hospital before she died between 7 and 8 this evening.

I am so glad she was so happy yesterday and, thanks to her unconsciousness, never suffered today.

The boys telephoned from the hospital frequently during the day and were so kind as to ask if I wouldn't like to come up to see the Madam. But I declined for a flock of reasons, - first because she was unconscious and couldn't recognize me and I couldn't have seen her under the circumstances. Then, too, I felt she would have appreciated it if someone remained here, for she was fond of quoting or misquoting that line: "they also serve who stand and wait".

Then, too, in town were all the ladies, - daughter and daughters-in-law, and having run out of anti-pain pills but not out of pain, I seemed to me I would do as well to remain at Melrose.

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J. H. telegraphed the Rands this afternoon when they failed to appear at their camp, as they had intended, according to Monday plans. Dr. and Mrs. Rand came by to see me at Iucca about 6:30 and remain for perhaps an hour.

In the mean time, J. H. had sent a car to town to get me some pills and I accordingly sat with Mrs. Regard after the departure of the Rands until the car returned. You may readily imagine sedate Madam Regard's surprise, - not to mention my own, when the front door, giving on the living room where we were sitting was suddenly opened with quite a swish, and in stalked one Grignan, announcing: "I want to go to the bathroom", and stordie determinedly on her course. It was the first we had seen of her in two or three weeks, I guess, and her abrupt entry, and surprising declaration, almost knocked us over.

I came home about 10 and folded up. At about 11:30, J. H. came to see me, and asked me particularly to attend the funeral on the morrow, being a member of the family.

He also took occasion to say that life would go on at Melrose just as before, and that so long as he lived, he hoped I would occupy Iucca and continue as though his mother hadn't departed. I thought that was noble of him, - after the hectic day he is bound to have had, to be so thoughtful as to cover such matters before going to his own rest.

After his departure, I fell to writing a flock of letters to people like Kate Perkins, Charles Mazurette, Miss Nellie, and so on, and fortunately my clock has stopped so I haven't the vaguest notion what time it may be.

But I reckon I had better fold up about now, for tomorrow will be another day, with the funeral from Melrose and burial in "atchitoches."

If these note seems more hodge-podge than usual, please count its incoherence off to fatigue, for, in reality, since we measure time by events, - and emotions, - it does seem months ago since this day got under way.....

Then, too, in the ladies' - daughter and daughter-in-law, and having run out of milk and butter, and out of rain, I seemed to me I would do as well to remain at Melrose.

3279

Thursday, November 18th, 1948.

Memorandum:

What a day!

This account of it will be as incoherent as was the similar sketch of yesterday's, but perhaps it will serve to keep you abreast with the passing scene.

As you may recall from my painful letters of May, June, July, August, September, October and some of November, it didn't rain. Well, today, along about noon, it began making up for lost time, and anticipating the balance of the year. J. H. estimated that perhaps 8 inches may have fallen during the afternoon.

It was terrific, and how the Madam would have loved it, for she always loved rainy days, whether in the old days when she was out in it, or in recent years when she used to view the African House from a downpour.

At 6:30 this morning, while I was shaving, - I usually shave at 5, - Fany knocked on my door, bearing an elegant dark blue or black suit. He said Mr. J. H. had told him to try it on me, for I might not have one newly pressed that I would want to wear, and if not, I might be able to use this one, - and if it didn't suit Fany's ideas of custom tailoring, I might try on some others which Fany should procure from J. H.'s wardrobe for me.

The first go round suited me alight, and that was that.

I went to the store around 8 to cancel my appointment for further extractions with the dentist. On my way back, I encountered the General, - the first time I had seen him. He confided that he had brought an extra dark suit with him, and if I didn't chance to have one handy in press, would I be kind enough to accept his. I thanked him, spoke of J. H.'s thoughtfulness in the same direction and remarked that both of them had displayed characteristic elements of warm heartedness that had come to them straight from their Mother. Whereupon both the General and I automatically fell to crying silently, while "Mellie's dumb brother, Andy, tapped me on the elbow from behind, and inquired how I was feeling.

The General and I moved off a bit and he echoed J. H.'s gratitude of last night and his request that I remain at Melrose.

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Back home, after a cup of coffee with the General, another tap on my door, and it was little old Mr. Bachelier, whom J. H. had sent for way back of fastly dissolving Little River. He said he was latter than he would have been otherwise, but he had to get his Sunday clothes out of moth balls, - they certainly confirmed the point, - and have Madam Bascen, a froushy blanchieuse, press the color of his wife shirt. He looked tacky and loveable. I cried a little a looking at him, but I can't say just why.

But we soon fell to talking of other things than funerals, and so got righted up again shortly.

Then I had to go to the store, - which never did open, - for the mail. On the way back, I encountered Joe Henry. We chatted casually a little, and then, as from out of nowhere, he remarked that if ever he were reduced to ten cents, that would still make two nickles and one of them would be mine for the asking. Then he and I cried, - and the drizzle kept drizzling, and I felt like a fool generally.

Back home, I changed my clothes and went to the big house at the General's invitation, for he wanted me especially to go with him to see his mother who was laid out at the end of the library. Frankly, I couldn't seem her, but the blanket of roses over the remainder of the coffin was wonderful.

Sister, inordinately quiet, sat in the adjoining dining room with her uncle, Stephen Garrett. She asked me to spend the balance of the morning until 2, with her there. I declined. But on the gallery I was busy as a bee chatting with old friends, many of whom I hadn't seen in much too long, people like Miss Robina, Miss Kate Perkins, a flock of P. D.'s from the Matchitoches college, and so on. Nina McInness had driven down with Dr. Wenk, and it was pleasant chatting with her, although she is associating with the wrong side of the family, I suspect, but perhaps she hasn't found that out as yet.

All the major net works had carried Miss Cammie's death notices this morning, and so, in spite of the overhanging clouds, lots of old friends appeared.

About 2, when the services were ready to begin, the heavens opened up and all the pent up water of half a year came cascading down. The general had asked me most particularly to sit with the boys, the chairs being arranged in facing tiers the long way of the library, with the family on the south side. First there was of the General, then J. H., Joe, myself, Payne and I suppose, Dan, whom I didn't see. I believe some of the "in-laws" and all the Wanks sat immediately behind us, but I am not quite sure of the arrangement.

I should have said, prior to the beginning of the services, that those who came for the services, and negro and mulatto friends of the Madam, were equally ushered into the big quiet library where she lay in state. Just as I was entering with the General,

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Bill Jones was just rising, having been kneeling before the casket, and being a Catholic, crossed himself before turing to leave. I didn't see many of my colored friends, although I am sure they were all there. But there were so many people of some distance who had journeyed here on account of the Madam who were especially kind to seek me out, even in some cases, where the individuals were quite unknown, save through name to me. I did an astonishing amount of kissing of these ladies, - which, I suppose, was a part of the emotional hold over from my earlier morning sprees in that element.

Well, the services got started, and they were duller than dish-water, for Presbyterian minister from someplace or other, - Winfield, I believe, taking it upon himself to deliver not a burial service but to divest himself of all his learning in the Old Testament, - Children of Israel, atomic bombs and heaven knows what all.

"He certainly could have done better", would have been exactly the way the Madam would have expressed it.

But, to my delight, it did have one excellent effect, - for it was so dull and so unregarded to the business at hand that there wasn't the slightest reason for emotionalism, - and speaking for at least one person in the gathering, I had had enough for one day.

Eventually the service was concluded and as we moved toward the gardens, with the cars a good half block beyond the big house, the skies were still coming down in buckets. We waited a few minutes, during which I kissed a few more ladies, including Mrs. Rand, Caroline Dormon, and so on, and then, with true Henry impatience we headed out into the storm. Umbrellas were of no avail and we were in water well over the tops of our shoes before we were half way through the gardens. As we got further along, there was a measure of comfort developed in that we could relax in the realization that we at least didn't have to avoid mud puddles, for they had all long since given way to lakes.

The hearse, of course, threaded the canals which, until today, were roads, in our trek toward Matchitoches. J. H., Celeste and I occupied the first car, the General and Lady, with Mattie, the cook, and Aurelia, the next. After that came the rest of the family, and then the friends and acquaintances, including both colors, which was precisely as the Madam would have had it.

Approaching Matchitoches, the rain ceased, but just as we approached the cemetery, it opened up again. The drenching worried no one, of course, since everyone was bound to be soaked who had followed in our train.

First the ladies were seated in row under the canopy, but later the General pointed out that there was ample room for all the chief mourners, and so I was escorted along with some other man, to the marquee. There seemed to be quite a bit of milling out

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in the place before the burial service got under way, and somehow, and not through any design on my part, I found myself along side Sister, who clasped my arm quite firmly during the service. At the conclusion of the ceremonies, - and what with those not under the canopy being soaked further by the drenching downpour, I arose with the others present, to leave the grave. All save Sister, and she continued to sit, apparently with a view to making some kind of a spectacle.

I never did figure out how the ting ended up, but I did see one or two of the boys go over to speak with her while I was standing under a non-sheltering great live oak with the General and wife and Celeste.

what with all the kissing I had been indulging in during the morning and early afternoon, I was struck by the fact that when Sister finally did come into view, - she had to pass where we were standing, - J. H., - who may or may not have given her a fraternal peck prior to that moment, said Goodbye to her and Dr. Wenk, - I had just finished shaking hands with the latter, - while Sister, passing fr some 5 or 6 feet from the General, gave him one look, to which he bowed politely, and without making a gesture in any way whatsoever, said: "Goodbye, Sister," p and the funeral was over.

Driving back home before dark, J. H., Celeste and I were astonished by the acres of water that stretched through one time cotton patches as far as the eye could see. Both on the cement and on the gravel roads, we traveled in water perhaps 6 or 8 inches deep most of the 15 miles. J. H. said it was perfectly wonderful to see all the pecanes, blown off by the rain, floating away in the ditches. He said he had no doubt that every pecane on Melrose was half way to Alexandria by now, having traveled through Cane and Little Rivers to Red River, and so on their way to the sea. Little Miss Alberta ought to get herself a fine net to stretch across the Mississippi to catch new Orleans, don't you think so.

Back home, I waded through more than ankle deep water to Yucca, where Funy, close at my heels, baled out my shoes and put me into a hot bath, - a very desirable item, I think, what with the physical potentials that might developed from a cold.

Somewhere along the line, I should have said that early this morning, the dining room table was removed from the room balancing the library, and I gathered huge sprays of magnolia leaves to explode from the fireplaces in both downstairs rooms of the big house. The dining room was reserved for funeral participants, not intimately connected with the family, the chairs arranged the short way of the room rather than the long way, as in the library. A dining room table was laid in the kitchen where a buffet lunch was served during the day, but on our return home, this had been removed, the dining room table restored, and the smell of fried chicken, scrambled eggs, coffee and so on were freighting the air after I had returned from my dip at Yucca. So was buried a great lady and a great heart. Please forgive the details if they have been too exhausting.....

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1888

Friday, November 19th, 1948.

Memorandum:

The weather is amazing, what with all of yesterday's oceans, for today is all blue and gold, rather cool, and most of the cotton fields, mirrors of leaden gray yesterday, nothing but beautiful, rich brown earth today.

Somehow in a metropolitan area, I was never too happy when people tapped on my door. Here I seem to love it, - and people are forever tapping.

Early this morning Don Worsley tapped on my door. I opened a bottle of the fine port he had brought me yesterday but which I had not discovered until late last night. He said he had come with a special message from two people, - Eleanor and himself. Immediately upon the Madam's death, he said they had decided that if, for any reason, I should decide not to remain at Melrose, they would like to have me come and live with them, - not for a visit but forever. That's the kind of thing, of course, that gets you down. Sometimes we are bound to wonder why the waters have to be so troubled, and yet a wonderful recompense appears, having only risen, I suppose, from the depths because the waters have been troubled.

Don said that as I knew, they were presently occupying a small place in town but that they expected to have a larger place on the edge of town before long, but no matter how small the momentary situation might be, they wanted me to know there is always ample room for me, and that when they move to more extensive locations, my place in their household would automatically expand to my greater convenience.

Naturally I gulped down my first glass of wine and poured us another. I then thanked him with all my heart, and said that I was remaining at Yucca on Melrose. The General, Paynie and Joe and I had quite a sitting in the library. The General told me on everyone's account that they had felt that if anything were removed by way of furniture or bric-a-brac from the house by one or another member, - and that one member had already removed too much, - the whole big house would soon loose all its original identity. Naturally I concurred, a flock of sergeants are putting the place back to rights today and tomorrow will be another day, with the S. G. and Joe Henrys remaining here until Sunday, when we shall I hope, be back to normal.

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A hundred varying interruptions have intervened between this side of the page and the reverse, and time runs short before the Saturday's post runs. I shall accordingly break off here and return on Sunday.

So many strange things have occurred, so many grand people have passed this way, I shall have ever so many things to report in successive sittings.....

I would add, parenthetically, that the excessively sharp pains in my temple during the past week have faded into a dull ache which is readily endurable, and I know they are gone for now and that the after math will itself disappear shortly, making it ever so much easier to attend to so many of the "must" items on the program.....

I early this morning Don Worsley tapped on my door. I opened a bottle of the fine port he had brought me yesterday but which I had not discovered until late last night. He said he had come with a special message from two people, - Misses and Misses. Immediately upon the Madam's death, he said they had decided that it, for any reason, I should decide not to remain at Melrose, they would like to have me come and live with them. - Not for a visit but forever. What's the kind of thing, of course, that gets you down. Sometimes we are bound to wonder why the waters have to be so troubled, and yet a wonderful recovery appears, having only risen, I suppose, from the depths because the waters have been troubled.

Don said that as I knew, they were presently occupying a small place in town but that they expected to have a larger place on the edge of town before long, but no matter how small the momentary situation might be, they wanted me to know there is always a room for me, and that when they move to more extensive locations, my place in their household would automatically expand to my greater convenience.

Laterally, I dipped down my first glass of wine and poured me another. I then thanked him with all my heart, and said that I was remaining at Melrose. The General, Payne and Joe and I had quite a sitting in the library. The General told me on everyone's account that they had left that if anything were removed by way of furniture or pipe-stove from the house by one or another member, - and that one member had already removed too much. - The whole big house would soon lose all its original identity. Laterally I conversed a look of elegance are putting the place back to rights today and tomorrow will be another day. With the S. G. and the Henrys remaining here until Sunday, when we shall I hope, be back to normal.

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Saturday, November 20th, 1948.

Memorandum:

It's after 9. I'm terribly tired. And yet I want to chat with you a little before I fold up my beard.

In my brief note of yesterday, I think I mentioned Don Worsley had come down to see me Friday. He came again last night after dark, together with the lady doctor. They brought me many gifts of food, imported cheese, elegant minced ham, cookies in long metal boxes, wine and whiskey and heaven knows what all. They are certainly lovely people and the conversation was intensely interesting. I shall want to speak of it in detail at later sittings, circumstances transpiring during the two preceding days.

I slept well last night and so was prepared for the very full day which Saturday turned out to be.

There was a general cleaning out of armchairs, examination of many papers, burning of vast quantities of unimportant (I hope) papers, and the rescuing of many treasures. The wives of the General, Payne, J. H. and Joe went through the garments. I rescued one thing being through thrown out as worthless, - one of the very rare original carpet bags, so famous in Civil War and Reconstruction days, - and item which formerly had graced a New Orleans museum.

Around 11, I asked Joe's wife to come to Melrose with me to run through a stack of letters and telegrams that had come for me in the morning post. The mere sight of an envelope from Dr. Butler was sufficient to recall the Madam's insistent observation: - "a real gentleman of the old school".

Before we had half finished, and just as we were concluding a notice "au mort de mon pere", Celeste arrived bringing over Essie Mae and Lois Lester, who had driven up from St. Francisville to sit with me for a while.

I poured wine from last night's gift for the four ladies, and we had a nice chat all 'round. Celeste and Juanita withdrew shortly, and Lois and Essie Mae remained with me for an hour.

I invited them to chat with the Henrys and to have dinner with us but they declined, saying they had come only to commune a bit with me, and that they would rather come back to see the

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others at another time.

As I left the dinner table, the cook asked to see me for a moment. She said the General had been looking for me and added that "I knows good Mr. J. H. is sure your friend, but if you could a heard the General just a singin' psalms about you all the way to town when we was fixing to bury his mama....."

I found the General a little later, and was glad to give him so particulars on a few points about his mother's wishes. He told me the Western Union office in town had been swamped with so many messages for Melrose extra clerks had had to be added to the staff. He also said that in spite of the masses of flowers in the library during the funeral and the fact that all the Henry grave plots in town were buried in flowers, the two Matchitoches florists still had so many orders, as yet unfilled, that they had appealed to him for advise on deliveries. He asked my advice and I pointed out that if the flowers were not delivered, the local dealers would suffer financial loss, if asked to convert the orders into cash, the latter to be devoted to charity, and that it seemed to me it would be fitting to leave a standing order with each establishment not to place the flowers in stated intervals on the graves, but rather to have a small card made, reading: "In memory of Cammie G. Henry", and this placed along side a vase of flowers, renewed at appropriate intervals, and placed on the proper table or desk in the main library of the college which the Madam had attended when a girl. My point was that the Madam herself would be the happier to know people using the library were sharing her flowers with her rather than having such ovens of them wilting away in the cemetery. The General said he liked the idea which hadn't occurred to him, although he had contemplated what disposition to make, and said the unfilled orders were of such extent that flowers for the library from this source might readily be filled for at least a year.

Returning to the big house, we joined the others who were disposing of various perishable, woolen things, odd wrappings and so on, and as comedy has a way of treading tight on the heels of tragedy, the picture of all the sons and daughters in law "scufflin' around", brought back a remark I had heard by a Texas Parish hill billy at a political picnic where food was bountiful and beer flowed:

"I ain't had half so much fun since they lynched papy."

A little later, Joe asked if he could fix a lock on my door for me at Yucca, and following that, we chatted a while, during which he told me a very

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characteristic thing which had occurred at the funeral.

The night before, the boys, in deciding to preserve their mother's room with all its larger and smaller evidences of her personality, reflected by things she constantly was associated with, decided that the gold pin she wore every day or her life should be used when she was lying in state, but that afterward it should be returned to the little old pin-cushion where she had placed it every night of her life for the last 50 years. J. H. accordingly instructed the funeral director to remove the pin, on closing the casket, substituting a beautiful red rose from the marvelous blanket of American beauties thrown over the lower end of the coffin.

Next morning when J. H. was in consultation with the funeral director, he mentioned, on leaving, that he would be glad to take the pin with him. The poor undertaker looked surprised and declared in astonishment: "Oh, didn't you know that just as I was closing the coffin, having removed the breast pin, your sister, Mrs. Wenk, stepped up to me and demanded it. Naturally, as a child of Miss Cammie, she was acting in behalf of you all, I supposed, and I handed it to her."

The pin was of gold but of less intrinsic value than sentimental association with the Madam. Isaac Erwin had bought it for his 13 year old bride way back in slavery times, and the madam always told me Miss Leudivine always remembered her mother, Carmelite Picot Erwin (Madame Isaac), as wearing it to pin together at the throat the little shawls she was want to wear when daily supervising the house servants at Shadey Grove Plantation in the 1850's. In a way it would be but natural the pin should descend to Sister who long since has weeded, begged or otherwise all the Erwin jewels from her mother. But in view of this fact, I think it wouldn't have cost her much to have contributed in this sentimental wish to preserve the pin in the Madam's room, and my guess is that, as in other instances she has long piled up, she has in this case in particular, paid much too high a price for practically snatching the object from her dead mother's breast.

On Sunday there is to be a family conclave, that is to say all the boys and Sister who was telephoned today and asked to come down to spend the day. I am one who will be glad when tomorrow night's shades have fallen and thankful indeed if no one, including myself, gets struck by flying atoms.

I shall speak of little more, and then fold up. When Don and the doctor were here last night, the latter said

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recompense in the form of money seemed so terribly important to her on Wednesday evening, immediately following the Madam's death for it seems that J. H. and the General in particular, in spite of the terrible loss, still found time to come to her in the hospital and to express their sincere thanks to her for having done everything humanly possible to save their mother for them. She said she wanted to add, in all fairness, too, that Dr. Wenk had observed to her that he thought she had handled the case as skillfully as anyone could. It is my understanding that Sister did not contact her, which, perhaps, is just as well.

After supper tonight, the General and I lingered a while, talking over old times and aspects of the morrow. He laughed in remarking on how rumors get started and breeze about with such speed. This morning, it seems, several negroes, long residents on the place, came to the store, obviously worried. They said they had heard that now the Madam was dead, Mr. J. H. wouldn't be running the plantation any more, and they had been "studying" about it and had decided if that could be true, they wanted to leave. They were assured that plantation operation would be continued as in the past, and beaming, they all left out for their respective cabins, greatly relieved and altogether happy.

It must seem extremely odd that I have failed to mention nothing more than a passing phrase regarding a painful bit of intelligence reaching me in today's communications. In view of the physical difficulties of the past week or so, plus the highly eventful and emotional impacts swirling about me of late, the news somehow seems like something long delayed and coming from another planet. It is as though my cup, brimming over with sorrow and joy refuses momentarily to receive another drop.

To be perfectly honest, I was tired when I sat down to this machine, and now I am growing sleepy. But somehow I am especially grateful to God tonight that, - you and I, - can share these little confidences, and there is solace in the realization that if no one else in the world could understand, the one to whom these lines are penned can do so, and one is everything.

I shall speak of little more, and then fold up. When Don and the doctor were here last night, the latter said

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Sunday, November 21st, 1948.

Memorandum: All day have the raindrops fallen from on high, gently this morning, with greater intensity this afternoon and tonight.

Early this morning before Aurellia arrived with her breakfast tray, several of my negro friends, vanished during the past few days, passed by to see me. They wanted to and I said some wonderful things but emotion at the time instantly washed the colorful wording away. It is enough merely to retain the nice warm feelings about the heart.

The family conclave was scheduled for 10 o'clock. I passed by the big house about 10:30, finding the wives of the General, Paynie and Joe sitting in the upstairs living room with Dr. Wenk. He came to greet me and was very kind.

We chatted, - all five of us for a little while, when the doctor withdrew, saying he wanted to wander about the house, somewhat ineptly asking on his way out who had slept in the Madam's ~~bed~~ bed. Following her death, he was told that no one had. The boys and Sister were holding their conference that J. H.'s, I believe, and it had been decided when Celeste and Madam Regard went to Church that on their return, they would come directly to the big house where all of us would dine together.

But Sister kicked over the traces at the family meeting, quit it completely once and retired to her car in the garden, but was eventually urged to return. The boys laid down their suggestion that the big house and gardens be maintained as a memorial to their mother, but Sister demurred, saying she would much rather divide up all the things and let the house go. She said she wanted her share of the furniture for purely sentimental reasons. The General pointed out that it would be a pity to break up the scrapbooks into six pieces, whereupon Sister recommended that the scrapbooks could readily be auctioned off to anyone of a dozen booksellers. Joe told me that at that point the General turned as white as a ghost, - furniture for sentiment, scrapbooks for cash.

I don't know how the final outcome terminated, but I assume it was to buy out Sister's share. If she insists on a division, the five boys will accept their portions, leaving them in the big house. If possible everything will be left intact without a division, Sister being paid off.

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Along about noon, all of us in the upper chamber were beginning to wonder about dinner, with nobody too anxious to approach the board, what with the probably impending explosions. But our worries were in vain, for Sister refused to come over to the big house at all, which meant that Celeste and Madam Regard had to stir up a dinner for themselves and J. A. and the wenks over there, while Fannie and wife, the General and wife, Joe and wife and Dan and I dined by ourselves, and the party was a heap gayer than it would have been, had the Shreveport contingent been present.

At least it must be admitted that Sister has continued to play out her role in her accustomed manner. Charity might dub her insane, while reason, without Charity, would merely charge her off as evilish.

Following dinner at his house, J. H. passed by the big house where we were still at table. As comic relief, he and Joe recounted doings at the store this morning which must have been pretty hilarious. Miss Maude (Mrs. Napoleon Bonaparte Carter), whose husband runs the melrose garage, appeared at the store in a suit of overalls. She had just been to the Melrose Social Club and obviously had made more than ample use of a membership card, for she was simply drunk. There were quite a few people in the store, but she shouted out to J. H. that she was fixing to go to a party and wanted a horse to ride. In spite of the difficult morning session awaiting him at home, J. H. immediately sense the possibilities, and recalled that an old mule had died during the night. He immediately suggested to some of the colored boys that they prop up the dead mules against the fence and saddle it for Miss Maude. In the end, however, it turned out the mule was too heavy for the boys to manage, and so they ended up finally my merely sending Miss Maude home, or at least, headed her in that direction.

As one old plantation mistress would have observed:

"I declare, J. H. is a sight!"
For the past 8 or 9 years, when there have been no guests, the madam and I have always had our Sunday night supper together alone. As it started getting dark tonight, I sat by my window looking into the White Garden, and I missed her.

But in a few minutes a tap came at my door, - J. H., - asking me to have supper with them over at his house. And that was nice, and what with this little chat with you, sleep tonight will be sweet....

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Monday, November 22nd, 1948.

Memorandum:

Lovely weather, all blue and gold.

So much furniture had been moved to the second floor on Thursday, it seemed logical to start in on the ground floor first, and the servants did a swell job of putting things to rights.

The mail continues very heavy, of course, and will probably continue for some days. There was a lovely letter from Robina with a detachable note, where on she suggested I might turn it over to the boys, if I cared to. In the letter she had spoken of the Madam and how fitting she thought it was the boys had decided to maintain the house and gardens. I sent it to the General.

He also spoke of the obituary in the Shreveport paper and offered to secure copies for me, if I wished. I haven't seen any, and asked her to send me one or two, which I shall, of course, be delighted to pass along to you.

Mrs. Rand telephoned this morning, saying they had hoped to get up yesterday, but were planning to come to see me on Wednesday.

Two or three people called from town, asking if they might drop in to see me during the week. What with a mild go-round with the dentist early on the morrow, to have some stitches removed, plus getting the place back in order, it looks as though the week will be fairly full.

And then, too, I have no doubt that just in the offing are unnumbered individuals who are wondering if the contents of the house are to go on the market, and they will undoubtedly be cluttering up the place shortly, although I shall have the store send them on their way before they make the front gate.

I passed by the store tonight to pick up J. H. for supper. As we passed through the gardens, he told me with mock seriousness, that while on the store gallery this noon, a man in a car had stopped and said he had heard the big house over there was full of antiques and that he would like to have a look at them with a view to buying, without mentioning his identity.

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J. A. told him he understood there was some pieces of furniture in the house, but it was his understanding that there was nothing for sale.

I suppose it was not more than a year or so back that Dr. Hogan, hearing the Madam was ill, had driven up here from Baton Rouge to bid for the library. Mr. Veith frequently spoke to me of his desire to handle the library, should it ever go on the market. In view of their performances during the past few months, they must feel like kicking themselves around the block about now.

While I think of it? I am wondering if you know the Chapter in the Bible, - I think it is Proverbs, - which has 31 verses. There is an old saying that each verse is for the individual whose birthday falls on the day of the month coinciding with the same day of the month he celebrates as that or his birthday. For example, the Madam's birthday was January 14th, and so her verse was No. 14, and as I recall, although I do not remember the exact wording, - it had something to do with the sea, - perhaps it runs "like the merchant ships, she bringeth her food from afar".

Not now, during such busy times, but sometimes in the future, should you be turning through your King James version, if you should find this chapter with its 31 verses, I should be ever so indebted if you would let me know. Frankly, if I might have the three verses, covering the Madam's birthday, January 14th, and the General's, November 23rd, and that of your own natal day, I should feel ever so indebted. But please don't busy yourself with a search for this now, for there is no rush about it, - any old time will do, and if you should discover that there is no chapter with 31 verses in Proverbs, please don't go searching for it elsewhere in that voluminous tome.

In the realm of literature, I must say I am woefully behind in my reading. What with one thing and another, I haven't had an opportunity to get anywhere. Some days back, I left the youthful Henry Adams in London with his father, early in 1861, and so far as I am concerned, he is still stuck there.

Eventually I shall get caught up with some of my correspondence, and then I shall get back to reading. In the mean time, and by way of an aside, isn't it fortunate all the things ordered for Arenbourg didn't come during the past week. I reckon they will be arriving almost any day now, and it will do my soul good to get to digging again in the persimmon and crepe myrtle departments.....

With a view to paying without mentioning his identity,

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Tuesday, November 23rd, 1948.

Memorandum:

It is so good to have your Friday letter in this morning's post. The post was sur-charged with letters, - including one from Dr. Miller, addressed to the Madam. But as my secretary is suffering from a soar throat, I put all the letters aside, save yours, as the others may well await another day.

It was grand to have so many particulars, all of which were distinctly new pieces of information. And yesterday, with old Venezuela flying in from the East, you will be able to learn many additional points first hand from the continent were so many things appear to be out of joint. It will interest me much to add to my own understanding of the situation, adding such details to those you so kindly sent along in today's post.

And thanks for letting me know the latest wrinkle regarding Madine, which, come to think about it, doesn't seem to add anything particularly new, except that we know she is still maintaining her courageous battle with a whole set of circumstances that must be wearing, to say the least. But I am glad to know she retains her position with the same publishers, for being in the same organization must make things slide along a little easier, since there isn't the necessity of re-adjustments in business, which, did they exist, would undoubtedly make her domestic chores the more trying.

And thanks much for giving me further quotations from press releases covering the newly found Boswell papers. It is going to be with impatience that I await the publication of some of these items. I suppose the Diary may be one of the early items brought out in toto, and even though excerpts may have been used by the good doctor himself in his construction of the life of Johnson, it's going to be fascinating to discover what material he ~~had~~ discarded in making up his full length portrait of his favorite character.

I had heard nothing at all about the acquisition of property in France by the U. S. Government with a view to using it for its Embassy and Consular staff headquarters. The parcels in the Rue Gabriel and the rue du Faubourg St. Honore ought to be items of unique value, and their proximity to the Embassy on the corner of those two streets will probably expand American holdings there to great advantages to Uncle Sam.

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Supper was late tonight, what with a tremendous pressure of business at the office, and it was J. H., finally escaping, who brought me your message of condolence which touches me so deeply. I had started this Memorandum while awaiting the supper bell, and that accounts for my omission of reference to your heart warming expression of sympathy and solace. The telegram had been brought by messenger from town and delivered at the office with other papers which accounts for it reaching me at this hour. But I am glad to have it at this time when day is done and I can hold it all to myself until the morrow when I shall share it with others.

had telephone connections been possible last Wednesday and Thursday, I have no doubt you understand perfectly that I should have responded immediately to my longing to communicate directly with most. But with the telegraph as second best, it did not seem adequate to me under existing circumstances at the time when telephone wires to the station in town were so heavily laden and when points I wanted to cover in such a message would have been so lengthy as to excite undue local interest covering matters of such a personal nature. By today, I feel assured, my unabridged messages of Wednesday and Thursday are in your hands, so that in learning the news from them, you are adequately supplied with a number of particulars which a briefer message might have left wanting in different respects. I hope with all my heart that my judgement in this matter meets with your approval, for in acting as I did, I tried, after careful consideration, to do what I thought would please you most.

Late this afternoon, Mrs. Rand passed by. It was good to talk with her. She sat with me for an hour or more at Yucca, and afterwards, we went over to the big house, to see how things were progressing in that direction. Because of the peculiar feelings of all the sisters-in-law who fear thunderbolts of criticism if they dare to tread where Sister has not, none of them care to hazard a visit to the big house, and so restoration of order there goes ahead under my supervision alone. Aurellia had just finished putting the upstairs sitting room to proper order, following a thorough cleaning, and Mrs. Rand was kind enough to say she thought the place looked fine, and ended up by driving Aurellia home, following the poor girls arduous day of labor.

There is something rather hilarious about the wives of J. H. and Paynie, both sitting at Celeste's all day, making acknowledgements of telegrams, etc., and pulling out various ones for me to answer, - for many of the people they don't know and have never heard of, - and both of them frightened to put their foot in the big house for fear of eventual blasts from the Shreveport area, while I, after an early morning round at the dentist's, have nothing to do but handle the mail and make the big house function, receive guests and generally carry on. - Again my sincerest thanks to you for letting me know so promptly two hearts are as one, for such knowledge makes everything alright.....



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Steve Henry
Note of Thanks to F.

R.D.

Bachelor 11/20

wednesday, November 24th, 1948

Memorandum:

Yesterday circumstances forced me to retain the last three paragraphs of your letter until today.

How aptly cited was your quotation: It never rains but it pours.

Your poor girl friend, poor you, for the sufferings and trials of one so near to one's heart cannot help but be experienced, too, by those who are dearest

In keeping me informed as to how things turn, you will be rendering me the greatest service, for naturally my thoughts will be centered on you and your neighbor's household, and keep abreast of trends will supply me with food for my soul.

And how odd it is that sometimes when we think we need peace and quiet the most, we are visited with unusual hubbub, as is your own household this Thanksgiving Day week end. For it seems sometimes that the enforced impact of personalities and events, coming at a time when we wish them the least, turn out to serve us as distractions of the heart, already too full, so that the swelling pain of grief and sorrow are automatically numbed by the pressure of secondary and outside matters that count not at all.

Incoming mail continues to pile up, unread and unanswered, and I feel no rush about exploring more than a few pieces each day. I am enclosing three I ran through today, - but shall put them under separate cover. The grand thing about the General's letter, I think you will agree, is that it must have been penned under pressure of business, - and was penned not because it was necessary.

Celeste confided to me today that she and J. H. had received a letter from Sister today, representing an attitude quite the reverse of that so violently manifested on Sunday. Shortly afterward the clerk told me that a small box from a Shreveport jeweler, arrived for J. H. by registered mail. I take it the package may contain the breast pin. Apparently the lady is beginning to back water. I haven't heard a word from her.

And intoday's express came, - may I tell you, - our

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oriental persimmons for Arenbourg. I am soaking them over night, and by first day, will be up and planting madly at our drive. They seem to be splendid specimens, and what with all the downpour of last Thursday, the time for planting should be most auspicious.

I got off quite a few letters today, in spite of other business, - with special letters to such people as Lucy Morgan, Gertrude Roberts Smith, Robina, Mr. Bachelier, the General, Miss Nellie and so on.

Putting the big house in order goes on a pace, - and does the dictionary say that is one word, - apace, - or two words, - with concentration continuing on the second floor.

I am astonished particularly at the ground Aurellia is covering. But come to think of it, hers is a labor of love for the madam, and that is always ten times greater in degree.

Passing by the guest room this afternoon to see what progress she was making, I found her up on a step ladder, polishing an armoir.

"Poor old soul," she mused, do you reckon she is up yonder in heaven, looking down at us and is glad we're makin' things look pretty."

I told her I thought she was, - and walked out.

Perhaps the best investment of my time I am making these days is to drop everything when some of the older mulattoes and darkies come to see me because they want to talk about the madam. Both old Uncle Nathan Carpenter in his mid 80's came up from Little River and Joe Rocque, Celine's husband, ampling about at 85, came to commune for a little while.

It was chill outside and the oldsters seemed comforted and content to sit my my fire and mull over their thoughts and the little glass of wine we had together. On his way out, unsteady and decrepit Joe and I crossed the gardens together, saying Goodbye at the gate. He said: "I want to come back and sit with you as much time as I have left. I guess I don't need tell you the old lady is gone and to us, it seems like she took with her a heart that was bigger than we had ever known but everybody she had lived with on Cane River all these years had a little bigger heart than they had had before."

So the days turn, and I must eventually fold up shortly, for Arenbourg and the persimmons will be awaiting me at dawn.....

3297

Thursday, November 25th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Thanks giving day, and I hope you didn't eat too much turkey and that you didn't have to frolic about too much with in-town or out-of-town guests.

It was pleasant in these parts, mostly sunshine, and a nice balmy breeze blowing from the general direction of the Gulf.

Early this morning, I dug a big old hole at Arenbourg, earthing in the fine persimmon trees with a view to having more time to devote to them individually on the morrow.

I guess I knew today was to be Thanksgiving, but somehow I didn't figure on the probable demands on my time that the holiday would bring, and it is pleasant to know that our new little friends have their feet in nice damp, warm earth, and will thrive there until I can prepare the individual places they will occupy permanently.

We dined at Celeste's, - J. H., Madam Regard, Paynie and his wife, the two clerks, Pan and I. The food was marvelous, but for once in my life I restrained myself from over-stuffing, - not that I really wanted to restrain myself, but merely because it was too much bother under existing circumstances to do much more than nibble.

One advantage of living in the shadow of the Post Office, we get deliveries on holidays, and today's batch of in-coming letters maintained pace with yesterday's. I'll send some of them along under separate cover shortly. I'm ashamed to say that due to inadequate secretarial assistance, there are flocks of letter as yet remaining unopened, but none of first rate importance, I think, but rather personal notes, - Rudolph, Dora and the like.

At harvest time, as at present, the plantation labors as on any other day. For some reason, I think Thanksgiving day has never been very much stressed in Louisiana, although it is a federal holiday.

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The cook was given the day off, but Aurellia worked as usual, and made further progress in tidying up the madam's room.

Aside from other pursuits, I seemed to have an unusually large number of telephone calls, mostly from watchitoches, from old friends, asking when they might come down and so on.

Dr. Rand was at his camp with a crew to straighten out his boats which had become entangled, one with another, and one of the speed boats under water, what with the sudden rise of Cane River because of last Thursday's extraordinary downpour.

I didn't know he was at Melrose until he tapped on my door about 5 o'clock. He wanted to invite me to spend a few days with the family in Alexandria, which I thought awfully nice of him. We fell to talking about a host of things and he told me he guessed his lecture at the college on Friday went over alright, since the crowd was pleasantly large and the audience appeared interested. I think he really gives a very interesting picture of the development of camellias, and especially in Louisiana. He told me the Guarantee Bank of Alexandria had asked him to address its staff one day last week, - or possibly it was this, and that evening had also been ever so pleasant.

I feel certain you will concur with me that in spite of all the dark clouds about the horizon in this year of grace, 1948, if officers and employees of banks can really get fascinated by discourses on camellias.

We talked until after dark, and on his departure, I told him I would be delighted to take a rain check on the Rand hospitality, for I preferred to remain at Melrose until after the turn of the year when the bridge work department is well in hand again.

He said he had recently recalled a conversation that took place in Scott's Ivanhoe, wherein two jesters discussed the merits of grilled goat, and that they were planning, - the Rands on the jesters, - in having a grilled goat affair at the camp this coming Sunday night and would I come. It seems they are all going to New Orleans to some Tulane football game on Saturday, so will not get up here until Sunday. I declare the way those people fly around, and how grilled goat goes with diabetes, I wonder.

On my way to M. H.'s for supper, the Dark Duke overtook me in the dark, confiding that Dee-Dee, - his father-in-law, was giving a fine gumbo on Little River tomorrow night and would like me to come. But I took a rain check on that one, too, and so the day plays out. Like a squirrel in a revolving wheel in his cage, it seems to me I have come out at night about where I went in this morning, with not much more to show for my trouble than exercise. Perhaps I shall accomplish more on the morrow...

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Mary Rhodes

11/1/48

Friday, November 26th, 1948.

memorandum:

from a slight drizzle beginning at first dark last night, a slow rain gradually developed, reaching downpour intensity about 4 o'clock this morning. After that it began to taper off until around 4 p.m. this evening. Naturally I didn't try to set out the persimmons in the resulting mud puddles, but it is good to know they got such a good soaking in their temporary resting place and that the permanent sites for each of them will be so well watered on the morrow, if weather then favors setting them out.

Today's pattern of activities followed pretty much along that of the last several days.

It came as a mild surprise that a brief note came from Sister. I asked madam Regard to read it for me, and while it was signed "Sister", madam Regard took the writing, - it was all hand written, - to be in Dr. Wenk's penmanship. It was an invitation to come and spend some time with them in their Shreveport home, - that was all. I rushed to my typewriter to get off a response by today's out-going post, thanking them for their generous hospitality, but remarking that physical inconveniences convinced me that there was no place like home at the moment. It would be nice to conclude that the letter might indicate we are not to be honored by their presence at Melrose within the immediate future, - but that is rather too much to hope for, I suppose.

I am wondering if, like me, you will find the enclosure from Mary Rhodes a little strange. Somehow it would seem to have been composed in two different states of mind, what with the first part being so different from the latter paragraphs. Somehow the first part suggests that same old persecution complex, or a furtiveness that seems to want to put the blame on me for not having been in watches during the last years. I shall disregard the first part in writing to her. I keep no tab on letters I write, but I am under the impression I have not been the last one to knock off a note in that direction.

3300

Celeste headed out for a day of shopping in Alexandria very early this morning, stopping at magnolia to pick up Miss Sally's daughter, "M" Sal, and Miss Sally's daughter-in-law.

In mid morning, Miss Sally sent a car from magnolia to Melrose, bidding me come to lunch with her, but of course I declined. I must make a round down that way shortly, but not before the holidays, I think.

Just to keep the record straight, let me set down the fact that Mr. Kane sent a condolence letter, addressed to J. H. and Sister. I am surprised he squandered three cents on a letter not calculated to net him any particular profit, but perhaps he had in mind some long range project. After all, a person who is so careful to save money by invariably borrowing ink from others to save the margin of a cent must be getting reckless indeed to toss pelf to the winds by throwing away one whole postage stamp. Perhaps, come to think of it, he was able to borrow one of those from someone.

Already the workings of the negro mind in its more primitive form is beginning to make itself evident in matters concerning the Madam's passing, and of course, as time goes on, the quantity and variety will swell.

This morning when I passed by the Madam's room just after first daylight, I was surprised to find Mattie, the cook, who hates doing anything away from her stove, just a tearing the Madam's bed to pieces. She told me that all night long the Madam had worried her, coming back again and again, telling her that she had done wrong in having neglected to put back the rubber sheet on the bed when Mattie and Aurelia made it up the other day. I told Mattie I thought the rubber sheet might just as well be left off the bed or given to someone who could use it, for I know of two or three oldsters on the place to whom it would be a great boon. But Mattie was adamant. She said she hadn't thought much about it when she and Aurelia had folded up the rubber sheet and put it away in a closet in the bath room, but all night long the Madam had "hanted" her, telling her over and over again that her bed had to be made up just as it always had been, and so there was Mattie, just struggling and pulling, all tangled up in the wires leading to the electric blanket, and generally distressed for the displeasure she had occasioned "the poor old soul" who hadn't been able to sleep good the night before because of the servants' folly.

What a business, and better ones will be coming to hand shortly, I am sure, and I shall indicate their character as they come to the surface.

3301

Sunday, November 28th, 1948.

Memorandum:

In Saturday's post came Lydia's letter, and knowing me as you do, I feel you will believe me when in all honesty and integrity, it was the sweetest and most consoling one coming to hand.

What touched me the most was the realization that you were forced to go through your accustomed paces of the work-a-day world and the early evening, holding tight to all that was welling up in your heart, and could only find release after day was well done and you could be alone with your thoughts after retiring. Although not at all similar, it recalled so vividly to mind another day when those who should have vibrated with emotions courting through your heart, expected you to concentrate your thoughts and energies on business, knowing full well as did they and you, that that very night you would be hurriedly sailing on a mission that had nothing but calvary at its termination.

On that day, something within me die, so far as my comprehension of certain of my fellow men was concerned, and perhaps at that very moment a new flame broke forth from the ashes of my heart sickness, a flame that unfailingly has glowed and mounted with ever increasing intensity and feeling.

Then a decade went by and yesterday came your letter, and somehow just the knowledge that tears, although shed far away and after enforced restraint, -- somehow, and words fail me in attempting to express it, my own tears could flow with complete mingling of emotion which, when they were done, left me at last in solace and in peace. It was the grandest message of all, for finally it seemed to me all was being shared together, and whatever is shared with all one's heart, is the most blessed gift God gives to mortals.

In the same post with your letter came one from Mrs. Lake of Fort Worth. The old adage that bad news travels fast seems to suggest that it is equally a truism that sad news sometimes travels slowly. For in her letter, written on Thanksgiving day, -- a week following the Madam's last day at Melrose, Mrs. Lake asked me to deliver several little messages to the Madam of whose death she had obviously not learned. Four nights during the past week, I have gone to sleep at my typewriter in the midst of getting off letters. I am bound to write Mrs. Lake tonight, but I am hoping to

1088

3302

keep awake while doing so, - it is so difficult to remember where one left off after dozing a couple of hours, - not to mention the wear and tear on one's neck, after remaining for a time in such an uncomfortable position.

Friday night the rain drizzled along moderately but unceasingly, culminating in a coudburst at dawn. Obviously the Arenbourg children would have to spend their week end in their temporary situation. It has drizzled all day today, too, and it is good to know that the children are all comfortably earthed in, and that when weather conditions permit them to assume their permanent places along the drive, they will be ever so well provided for in moisture.

When not tied up with people on Saturday, I spent much of my time straightening out the books the Madam had read in the past couple of years, and I need not tell you in which direction my thoughts constantly flew as one volume after another were twice blessed for having come to my hand from her hand from yours. I have made a row of them across the top of the old cherry secretary in a corner of her bedroom, hard by the Franklin stove, and somehow, more than anything in the room, they seem to reveal her memory profoundly.

In spite of the unfavorable weather, - especially under foot, - there were many people who came to see me, including a number of negroes who wanted to talk about the Madam. It was a pleasure to see all of them and furnished an excellent excuse for not touching my typewriter until long after dark tonight.

I had expected to have supper with the Rands, but they couldn't get up from Alexandria. Don Worsley came to see me an hour before dark. Dan followed shortly, saying J. H. wanted us to dine at his house, where we were just the family, and Dr. Eleanor. I believe the lady doctor had made a semi-professional call on Madam Regard. After supper, the Worsleys came over to Yucca, where we had a pleasant and prolonged chat. I learned of the inevitable rumors that spread about the parish immediately following the Madam's death, - matters regarding clauses in her will, etc., - and of course she left no will at all. I shall refer to these and other attendant gossip a little later.

At long last, and after so much complaining about my physical aches and pains, I am glad to say that they cannot be drawn on further, and the 6th of December, when the next go-round begins, seems ever so far away. I apparently have lost quite a bit of excess flesh, so that my clothes are fitting less snugly, and I am really feeling alright. I have invited a few of the Madam's friends to have tea in the library tomorrow, old friends who want to come bye before the inevitable changes in the atmosphere have set in, and it seemed to me a good idea to have them come at the same time, and so help entertain each other.....

3303

Mary Lambdin 11/10/48
Mina 11/11
Parlange 11/19
Overdyke 11/13

Monday, November 29th, 1948.

Memorandum: A lovely day, all blue and gold, and pleasantly cool.

Some of the people I had expected to pass bye didn't, and some I hadn't counted on did, and so everything assumed just the right proportion.

Long before the afternoon gentry arrived, some of my colored friends made a round at Yucca to say Howdy. Early in the morning, the Dark Duke (Log) and his brother Peter were among those tapping on my door. I gave them coffee and they sat and chatted for a few minutes. Somehow the conversation turned to food, and the Dark Duke declared that while all the rest of the colored folks like "possum", he himself would never eat any. He said those animals were always digging around in graveyards and he felt sure they sometimes nibbled on people occupying the place. "Jus' look," insisted the Dark Duke, "here sits my brother, Peter along side me. 'ow supposin' he dies and is buried in the graveyard near me on Little River, and I come to catches a 'possum and eats him. After that wouldn't I look pretty, me a-walkin' down the road with a belly full of Peter."

If you don't mind, the Dark Duke is a sight. Taking advantage of the fine weather, Aurelia flew into the washtubs, and turned out a day's work that would make a steam laundry look like amateur stuff. Some of the servants aren't holding up so well, and the yard man, Sam Peace, brought forth but a pitcher of milk from four cows. Either Sam or the cows will have to do better than that. It could be that the fault is partly mine. A while back, at Sam's request, - he had failed in efforts in other quarters, - I got his aged mother with whom he lives, on relief or old Age Pension. That, of course, means fifty dollars a month for Sam, since his mother is partially blind and dependant upon him. That monthly check may account for Sam's tendency to loose interest in the milk situation. If I'm smart, I'll make no attempt to get a

3303

3304

pension for the cows at least.

Letters continue to clog the mails, some of condolence, some clearly written without the knowledge of the Madam's death. In the latter group, one came today from a comparatively recent pilgrim from Alexandria, of all places.. I got off quite a few letters last night, and made a small dent in the stacks awaiting me during the day. Much, however, remains to be done before I begin seeing the top of my desk.

At the store, both in the morning and afternoon, there were lots of people from up and down the river, converging on the place to cast their votes covering some matter regarding cotton control or some such matter. I had occasion to pass by a couple of times and had difficulty in getting out again, what with the many mulatto land owners who wanted to talk with me about the Madam. I'm ashamed to admit I didn't recognize half of them, but that didn't matter, since we all were interested in the same subject and good will was flowing directly from the heart. Many of them recalled how the Madam had rescued the portrait of Grandpere and restored it. I am always glad to have them come and see it, - and of course all the mulattoes are somehow kind, directly or indirectly, and perhaps before Christmas, I shall ask a number of them to come on a Sunday afternoon, with coffee and some little cakes to add a touch of festivity. I must contrive to grapevine the information to my negro friends in advance, because neither shade of color would feel too happy, should they both converge on Yucca at the same hour. Then one or two representatives of both races chance to drop in on me without special invitation, everyone understands, of course, that all guests are on perfectly equal footing under my roof, and even though the mulattoes must sometimes be puzzled, shocked and possibly a little confused that negroes should thus be admitted into the home of a white person since they probably wouldn't be received in a mulattoes home, still we always seem to break down the cast resentment before many minutes have elapsed, the breaking down of which, I hope, last a little while after the mulattoes have quitted my portals, - but it probably doesn't.

According to my favorite weather man, tomorrow will be warmer, cloudy and humid, - a piece of information which delights me, of course, for today's sunshine and gentle breezes may have sufficiently dried things up for operations to be started at Arenbourg about sun up tomorrow.

The thoughts expressed in your letter of Saturday continue to vibrate in my soul. May I say once more how much vitality it has given back to me, - this expression of true sympathy which makes my days so much nicer, thanks to you.....

3305

8-24-48
11/27

3306

November 30th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Well, we had quite a lot of fun at supper tonight, - J. H., Dan and I.

Dan read us a sort of post-condolence letter he received from Caroline Dornon today, expressing sympathy, detailing her adventures in the watery roads on leaving Melrose on the day of the funeral and so on. Then came the phrase: "In this kind of a letter, I hate to bring up this matter but....."

Then she went on to say that on the day of the funeral she noticed seven or eight empty spaces on some shelves in the library and she accordingly recommended that either he or I get a note book and enter in the names of all those who are coming this way and borrowing books.

Dan said he thought he would toss the letter to his secretary tomorrow and tell her to answer it any way she pleased.

I offered this idea: Dan might keep the note book. Whenever somebody came to Melrose, threatening to borrow a book, the clerk at the store could be advised and could telephone Dan to come down immediately from his office in Matchitoches. On arriving he could track me down, either at Melrose, Yucca or Arenbourg, and after finding me, I could take the library key from my pocket and unlock the library door. After due time, when the proper book had been selected, Dan might make the notation in his book, and then, after successfully trying to find me again, he could go back to his business in Matchitoches, the customer go on his way and I could resume whatever I might be up to.

Surely little Miss Dornon's intentions were the kindest, but why, if she just had to write, she didn't pen either J. H. or me a line, since we are the only two on the place during the day, I cannot imagine.

This morning I found Madam Egon's household all torn up. It is wonderful to me, so close in time to such mightier matters,

3306

3306

how the lady, - and by repercussion her mother, could be so all by sixes and sevens because the maid was planning to move to another plantation. I know it is difficult to train servants, and with the holiday season approaching, - with all the entertaining thrown in, it must be annoying to train another. But as human values stack up and what is primarily important is borne in upon us, how such a matter can move one toward a fit of nerves I cannot imagine.

The maid is a daughter of that remarkable Elmer, formerly a so-called cook at Melrose. The mother is pregnant, with the old Stork scheduled to fly over her cabin almost any time, and yet the mother doesn't bat an eye lash in considering the pulling up of stakes with a half dozen children and all her plunder, to occupy a new situation in the Bermuda area. For me, such courage would be positively heroic, but good natured old Elmer seems to take it in her stride without any qualms whatsoever.

Between jumps this afternoon, I found time to receive a young man, sent in by the store. I invited him in, and made him comfortable in the sitting room of the big house, supposing him to be on some personal call, although his name meant nothing to me. Preliminary conversation stuck no inkling of his mission until he pulled forth a book from his pocket and handed it to me. This is the first time I ever knew a book salesman to come so far afield. He was rather on the dull side, conversationally, and having a couple of other things to do, I broke the sitting off without too much delay, explaining that since I was half blind and that none of the servants could tell a from a, so far as being able to read, and what with a shelf of cookbooks already spilling out of their places, I guessed I had better decline his proffered merchandise. It turned out that he came on the recommendation of Senator Capper of Kansas, but even that wouldn't assist in stirring up a pan of biscuits so far as we were concerned.

The enclosure speaks for itself. It arrived today. Lyle was forever telling about a slightly simple aunt of his who used to sit on the floor on occasion and declare she felt "just like a steamboat". Well, a steamboat is one thing, and a washing machine another. Of course there might be dirt in a washing machine, and if going full tilt, the thing might suggest a "Whirling Dervish", and perhaps the writer of the enclosed letter really has something there.

My little friend, the White Throated Sparrow, wistles plaintively many times during the day near the old magnolia tree. The Madam and I always used to listen for him, and his voice was the last feathered friend she ever remarked on. I love him the more because he makes everything seem more in tune

RD

3307

11/29

no gaining as I yesterday. December 1st, 1948.

Memorandum:

Another all blue and gold day, with much accomplished and much to be done.

The usual number of callers passed this way, but I had the best talks with Lemence who came at 3:30, and just after she had left, the Rafas, - Dr. and Mrs.

Peter's problems were the most pressing, for he came to talk over his troubles with me and to tell me he was leaving for Alexandria during the afternoon. Peter is having marital troubles. He apparently can live with the lady whom he has been husbanding during the absence of the really husband in Japan, nor can he be content not to live with her. He appears to object to other youths courting the same lady, and he cut a couple of boys with his long knife, styled a Texas Jack in Louisiana, a Grabbapple Switch in Mississippi, - and why I don't know, so far as the difference in names go.

Peter has been away before for 6 months or a year, but has eventually drifted back. The reason I hate to see plantation negroes go to town is based on what one of them told me once:

"We likes to see them bright lights, but we ain't happy in town. But after we gets used to the bright lights, we ain't never happy again on the plantation, and yet we don't like it in town."

Somehow it reminds me of the store windows in town last Christmas time, with the Biblical settings, with one being struck by what at first appeared to be a scene in the Garden of Eden, but what turned out to be nothing but Adam and Eve in the window of the Jitney Jungle.

J. H. and Celeste were in Shreveport this afternoon, and had not returned by dark. I reckon Celeste went to do some shopping. I reckon J. H. went with a view to effecting some kind of a settlement with the recalcitrant heiress. I hope he gets to first base, but I doubt it.

The mails continue fairly heavy, with perhaps twenty five or thirty first class letters touching on Aunt Cammie's passing and a half dozen or so from farther afield, touching on another loss I sustained the same week. I don't get around to respond to these until night, and I don't try to carry too many of them in my mind between their reading in part at noon and my taking of

3308

Underwood in hand after supper. Gradually I am gaining on the considerable assortment, but I am not putting any undo or rather undue strain on my keyboard.

You will already have noted that I am sending you two of the clippings from the Shreveport paper. I don't know why I am sending two, except that I thought you might want one to attach to one of the Memoranda, and possibly one for a scrapbook, - or some such. Curiously enough, I haven't found the proper time and the proper person covering at the right point to read this notice to me, but I assume it is alright, or Robina wouldn't have avoided appropriate comment.

I am also sending a couple notices from a local paper with a newspaper reproduction of a photograph taken by Frances Benjamin Johnson, along about 1946.

My impulse is to put several of the other houses in order before Christmas when another pitching out of things may get under way. The Weaving House, or Looming House and the Bindery have been neglected during these past couple of years or so. The ante bellum kitchen, later known as "The Shop, - because it had at some time been used for that purpose in Reconstruction Days, - a Blacksmith Shop for the plantation, is another place containing many a treasure that should be set in order before the vandals strike it. The same for Dr. Miller's cabin, the African House and so on. These things will not be so difficult when the holidays are done, and perhaps by some miracle, I can contrive to get them by-passed for another month or so. I guess none of the Henrys have been in any of these buildings within the last half dozen years, excepting perhaps Joe. But Joe and Dan are on the side that favors burning as a means of cleaning, and with little or rather no interest in ante bellum culture, the contents of these buildings would make excellent fuel for their furnaces.

Already poor Yucca is beginning to bulge at the seams, and still I yearn to save more treasures from destruction.

The thermometer this morning was again down to 32, which, of course, is too chilly for "airing" the children at Arenbourg. There is an old saying that goes: "Three frosts and a rain", and it appears to me it is going to be chilly again tonight, so perhaps a warm wave is just in the offing, and I shall be able to get things set at Arenbourg between the chill and the shower. Already the narcissus are beginning to climb skyward, and it is pleasant to know they are thoroughly established and about to burst into bloom. It looks like a busy season ahead, and Arenbourg must be the first in the parade.....

3309

I da Mazurek 11/26
Carolyn D. 11/24
Annette Duchesne 11/24
Aunt a 11/24/48

Thursday, December 2nd, 1948.

memorandum:

Occasional showers and warm. That is alright for our side, and the Arenbourg children remain bedded down, snug and safe.

Today, being Knipmayer Day, the good doctor came by as usual. He didn't have much news, but sought much from me. I gave some and withheld some, and as he was already late for his dinner at Magnolia, I reckon he left pretty well satisfied that he had obtained all.

I was glad to learn that I spent the Thursday of the funeral with Miss Sally. All Magnolia was at Melrose that afternoon, and I told him frankly I thought he honored Aunt Cammie more by comforting Miss Sally than had he left her alone to attend the funeral.

Late this afternoon, the head of the Parish Welfare Department drove down from town, bringing me what appeared to be a fine new Reading Machine, that item being the agent for the Federal Government. I was glad I examined the thing before relinquishing my old one, for I have contrived to make the old one still work, and I discovered that the new one had been damaged enroute and wouldn't play at all.

Now that a couple of weeks have elapsed I will mention a most unfortunate remark that occurred when the Madam was taken to the hospital. Dr. Worsley told me there was a rather long bruise mark just below her breast, another on her lower lip and one on her shoulder, I believe. Three fingers of one hand were injured and I believe the skull was fractured.

When a consulting physician was called in to assist with the examination, there were a number of nurses and attendants in the room, and the consulting physician exclaimed: "Why, she has been beaten." Within a short time, thanks to the nurses or attendants, or both, the gossips were going full blast all over town.

In trying to picture to myself what probably really happened was this: the Madam probably started to get out of bed, - and as the bed was rather high, she used a footstool from which she probably fell, striking her stomach on a rather tall enamel "vase de nuit". That would account for the bruise on the stomach. I am under the impression that she later attempted to stand up again, and losing her balance, fell and struck her

COCC

3310

head either on the marble top of her night table beside her bed, or possibly the iron doorstep, which stood nearby, the doorstep perhaps half an inch thick, being a band of metal in the form of a circle, - hollow, and resting on a flat iron base much like that ordinary alarm clock rest on. No one will even know exactly, of course, and as it was dark when I saw her figure on the floor, really seeing nothing but something white from the slight light from the bath, I couldn't say exactly in which position she was, for my only impulse was to pick her up and get her back into the bed, little supposing that she had more than fainted.

In town, by noon, the rumours had it that one of the children had carried an accident insurance policy for the Madam, giving double indemnity in case of accidental death. The chief medical officer of the Parish, according to some, recognized some wonderful publicity for himself, what with the prominence of the Madam, if an inquest were held. This came to J. H.'s ears, and immediately he quashed the whole thing, pointing out that the Madam carried no insurance and that there could have been no motive to benefit anyone in her death. His adamant position reduced the prospect of an inquest. I learned of much of this from the lady doctor and her husband who called on me the night of the funeral. The lady doctor told me the death certificate, properly signed by the consulting doctor and the chief Parish medical officer, was on her desk for signature and that she would sign it the following morning.

I certainly would not have welcomed an inquest into a death which was so obviously due to natural causes. Having been the one to find her, I would no doubt have been called, and while I know nothing about such business, I should not have cared to testify, in view of the personal relations with the family, for while the whole world knew of the peculiar traits of la Grignan, it would have been unpleasant to have to try to explain those to a world that would scarcely be able to comprehend.

And so the matter was closed without inquest, as, I believe it should have been. On the following Sunday when I saw Dr. Wenk, he asked me several circumstances about finding the Madam, which were perfectly justified, both as her physician of former days and as her son-in-law, but one of them I thought unnecessary, since the "adam" was gone: "In picking the Madam up, did you strike her head against anything?" I told him I felt sure I did not, for although I might be clumsy, I also have a heart, and I thought I had presence of mind enough for any circumstance, involving an unfortunate human being, to nurture them tenderly, and especially at such a time. Dr. Rand roared with disgust when I mentioned this to him, not only that the question was asked but also the absurdity of supposing that I or anyone, in picking up a prostrate body, would be able to do so with such gusto as to cause a fracture to the skull.

I must tell you frankly that when I left the "adam" into the bed, I had no idea she was seriously ill. One Sunday

3311

two or three years ago, I had found her about 2 p.m., on the floor, after she had been taking a nap. I was surprised to find her there but in view of her frailty, I wasn't particularly surprised that she had been unable to get up by herself. I assisted her to her feet at the time, and she was perfectly alright. I suppose something of the memory of that episode came back subconsciously to me on the morning of the 17th, and a little later, when the lady doctor, on examining her, told me she was afraid it was fatal, I was for the first time really shocked, for up until then I had supposed she had gone to sleep, after falling to the floor, and when she didn't speak when I had picked her up, I suppose I imagine she had fainted.

Well, so much for the minor doings which did not find place in print. This is not a particularly pleasant recitation, I know, but loving her as you did, I have felt you would be glad to know all that swirled round us on those difficult mid-November days. Hence this detailing of the circumstances.

I have sent some enclosures under separate cover. The one from Anita I was unable to have read at the moment, being unable to discover anyone in the "thopian section who could manage the long hand. If you will be so kind as to run through it, tossing along the main points whenever convenient, I shall be appreciative. Don't bother to make a transcript, for that is not at all necessary, and your synopses are always so splendid that I am always able to digest the kernels of grain with complete assimilation.

Forgive the length of the Memo. I shall make the next one shorter.....

3312

Friday, December 3rd, 1948.

Memorandum:

It's grand having your letter in today's post, along with the unexpected enclosure, which I return herewith.

First off, let me say how important was your letter, written before you had learned of the tragic events that had transpired here. It was precisely the kind of letter I needed most, and thanks to it, my sense of proportion was the more readily maintained, and the ground beneath my feet made more firm.

It has always seemed to me that we are much better off when we can maintain sight of a pattern and a way of life constantly in spite of the "acts of God" that sometimes descend upon us so swiftly. I may or may not have mentioned before that immediately on leaving the Madam, after a preliminary examination, the lady doctor came to me in an adjoining room where I was waiting and said she doubted if the Madam would survive, and that the ambulance would be taking her to town shortly, and would I like to accompany her to the hospital. And my answer was in the negative. My thoughts were that she would be accompanied by one or more members of her family and that at the hospital she would have all the attention doctors and nurses could give, and that she would have her children with her. It seemed to me at the moment I was asked if I would care to go, that I could do much more for the Madam by remaining at home, pacifying the distressed state of the servants, and getting things organized so that food would be prepared for many extra guests, places provided for them to sleep and so on. Frankly, I have never been one to allow myself the luxury of personal excitement when mightier matters than my own personal feelings were involved. I was glad to remain at Melrose, - all else had left, - and do what I could to keep the place functioning. Somehow your letter, posted on the Friday following, prior to your receipt of knowledge of happenings here, was precisely in line with my own actions of a couple of days before, and it was balm to my soul because it kept bright the lamp of other horizons, so important to you and to me, and so slow tended to widen the perspective which temporarily, in view of the on-rush of events, had temporarily narrowed to such a limited vista. Please don't feel sorry for that letter, but rather rejoice, for in reality, it was the most precious ballast in the world for a ship that was staggering under the impact of too many circumstances, all concentrated on the weakest point which had already been far too over-strained. I shall always bless you for that letter in particular, for with it came the confirmation that your thoughts were with me and that there are other aspects of life than those of the

3188

3313

moment which temporarily tend to engulf us. Yours was that "one small candle" which Mary Rhodes used to talk about. Out of the gloom it struck out just the kind of light I needed most, - and as has invariably happened in the passed, as though by some divine inspiration, even without sensing it herself, perhaps, my Lady of the Lamp appeared in precisely the one light I needed most.

Each day's post continues heavy, but because my secretary isn't coming quite up to the emergency, I select only those few items which are all important to me. In today's post, for example, I merely sorted out your letter and one of a legal nature, having to do with the settlement of an estate which is probably already insolvent, but which cannot be wound up without a few signatures, seals and flourishes, which plague me much at the moment, for I am in no physical or mental mood to get tangled up with a lot of local legal big wigs where news of a private nature flies around too widely. I shall balk at the latter business for a while, concentrating exclusively on run of the mill matters of local concern.

Among other letters in today's post, - to be opened Heaven alone knows when, I notice an envelope from Pennland, and another from Ashville, probably from your friend, G. R. S. They and the rest of them, with many from past days, can continue to wait.

But just to prove that even in letters of condolence, the hilarious may creep in, I must refer to a letter in today's post from Miss Ley of Baltimore, an old friend of the Madam's with whom I have been correspondending for years in the Madam's behalf. During all that time, Miss Ley, may or may not have written me directly, - although of hand, I should say she has, but I can't for the life of me remember, although I do know that she never failed, in writing the Madam direct, to send much appreciation and love to Francois. Celeste chanced to be at the post office this morning when I picked up my mail, she ran through some of her letters, which included a family letter from Miss Ley, which Celeste read to me. In it Miss Ley spoke of her happiness in knowing "Francois was with Miss Cammie during these last trying years, and that I appreciate so deeply her unfailing kindness in writing me so constantly on Miss Cammie's behalf". On reaching Yucca, I ran through the envelopes just reaching me, and discovered one from Miss Ley, addressed to Mlle. Francois Mignon. I don't know if I will ever open the darned thing, - it hands me such a laugh just to glance in the direction of the stack in which it is resting. Perhaps, under the impact of the unexpected news, poor Miss Ley got her sexes so entirely confused, - and that would be alright. But if she should add a post script, asking me confidentially what I thought of the relative merits of Midol versus Miss Rinkam's pale pills for pale people, - that would be too much.

3314

I apologize for spilling over on to a second page, the second day in a row, but I did want to respond to your question as to whom we are indebted for particulars in the Shreveport and Natchitoches press, covering the Madam's obituary.

I am told on pretty good authority that seven hours before the Madam's demise, Sister was rushing around frantically in the Natchitoches hospital, trying to find a pencil sharpener, and seemingly intent on anticipating the impending death of her Mother. Putting Barnett Lane up in front sounds like something from her fertile brain.

I think I may have remarked before that it does seem a little odd, in view of the years I have handled all the Madam's correspondence, including extensive research on family matters, etc., that no one ever consulted me on matters which they must have realized they didn't know much, since invariably during these years, they have always turned to me, - and I cite the matter of Sister's dependence on me, for example, as the only means by which she could engineer herself into the D. A. R., which certainly is concerned with pedigree if anything is.

Vaguely, too, some of them may have known of some of her charities and philanthropic interests, - and yet no one ever asked me anything about it, and although I haven't had one of the obituaries read to me, I'll bet dollars to doughnuts not a word was said, for example, about the establishment of the Cammie V. Henry room at Pennland.

The good Lord knows I had enough on my mind, following her death, without taking on the writing of an obituary, but there is one thing I don't have to tell you: - I wasn't running around ~~xxxx~~ like a chicken with its hat off hours before the Madam died, worrying about where I could track down a pencil sharpener.....

3315

Memorandum: when asked whether he recalled the date when he was released from the hospital, he stated that he was released from the hospital on 10/10/68. He stated that he was released from the hospital on 10/10/68. He stated that he was released from the hospital on 10/10/68.

Saturday morning dawn warm and humid with an overcast sky. Peter came by early, still all torn up about his domestic affairs. He wanted to talk to me, and I think he likes to sit by my desk, for he glances often at the portrait of his mama, Victoria, which was done in oils shortly before I saw her for the last time in 1938, and only a few months before her death. Peter looks like her more than the Dark Duke or the other children, and he never seems to tire feasting his eyes on her picture.

And at the same time it seemed to me an excellent opportunity to get Peter's mind on something else, and so, armed with spades we headed out for Arenbourg. We transplanted six of the large sized persimmons, and set out the ten oriental one that had come from Herr Hauser. Beginning at the gate on the Bermuda road, and moving back toward the raggedy house, there are now 2 oriental persimmons first, then 2 bread up American ones, then 2 pears, - in all cases one on each side of the drive, of course, then two more bread up persimmons, 2 pears, and then the raggedy house. Turning eastward along the drive, there are 2 pears, 2 oriental persimmons, two pears, two persimmons, and so on alternating down to the Alphonse gate.

From the recent rains the ground was moist but not too damp. The day remained humid, and last night a delicious little drizzle developed, as though just made for the day's planting, and there was a good little shower this morning. You can see from all this talk that I am enchanted at the way things turned, and that we are undoubtedly justified in assuming that the children are getting off to a most advantageous start.

3316

I heard a letter of condolence that came to Celeste in a somewhat roundabout way, and I am going to try to get a copy of it. It was written to the Madam's brother from a 76 year old negro in New Orleans who said he had noticed the Madam's obituary in the paper, and although Mr. Garrett probably didn't remember him, he was the child of Mary Montgomery, the family cook when the Madam was a little girl, and although he hadn't seen her in nearly 70 years, he recalled the days when they were children. He went on to express his sympathy and closed with an expression of his sorrow. It seemed to me quite remarkable.

I shall write to him if I can get the address, for I want to thank him on my own behalf, and I think I may be able to tell him something about his mother, - a few things, perhaps, that might be of interest to him, if they have slipped his memory, for I have often heard the Madam speak of old Aunt Mary. She was born a slave in Alabama and when a girl, was brought to New Orleans and put up on the block in the slave market of the old St. Louis hotel, where one of the Frudhommies on the Joyous Coast bought her. She lived on Cane River until freed by the "Yankee war", after which she journeyed to South Louisiana where she cooked for the Garretts for years. She always asked them to save her wages for her, and when she grew older and wanted to give up work, the Madam's father showed her a nice little house in Thibodaux that was for sale and told her she had money enough to buy it and to live there, if she cared to. She was enchanted. The little house was accordingly purchased in her name and a fund placed in the bank for her to draw on. I don't know where this son who wrote the letter was at the time, perhaps with her, perhaps making a living elsewhere, but old Aunt Mary continued to live comfortably in her little house for a number of years, and on her death was buried in the Thibodaux cemetery. Nice, don't you think?

I heard today's "Q. B. S. You Are Here" program today, and thought the execution of the Austrian "archduke-mporer of Mexico, in 1857 well done.

The mail continues to stack up. My secretary couldn't make it yesterday, and from three to five minutes after he arrived this afternoon, the hands came, - the doctor and Ed, - which knocked the mail out, of course, and much to my sorrow, for after to orrow's sitting at the dentist's, I suppose I shall be in no mood to turn to much other than my downy couch.

But it was sweet of the hands to carry me off to their camp, where there were several young people, gay conversation and excellent food. It was first dark before I got back to Yucca, where I found Ora, the airdale, and five cats, sitting in a row on my gallery, waiting for their supper, and I liked that, too. And now, best of all hours of the day, we have had our little chat, and after a couple of other little matters, I shall tune in on "red Allen, - and fold, and may you be as lucky in bringing you day to a close.....

Versailles

3317

Monday December 6th, 1948.

Memorandum:

How nice to have your letter in today's post.

My wandering secretary didn't appear until after 9 o'clock tonight, and tanks to some electrical storm through which our local current travels, our attack on the mail came to an abrupt halt just before we finished reading the first page of your letter. I should have liked to have finished it, - there was no rush about assaulting the stack of stuff still awaiting me, but in view of the evident tiredness of my little helper, plus the fact that I had had ten extractions today, it seemed good to me to reserve the pleasure of the balance of your letter until the morrow. And so I pen these lines in the dark, deeply grateful to you for letting me know that you are all right, or at least alright, - and that some of the social pressure under which you have been staggering has eased a little.

I am so glad you told me about Mrs. Roosevelt at Versailles. What a splendid tribute to her that the fountains should have been turned on for her especial benefit in such an off-season period. I don't ever remember having seen them at this time of year, but I am sure they are very lovely at any time during the 12 months. Contemporary politicians or big wigs of the Beaux Arts may not have thought of it, but of one thing I am quite sure: the spirit of Louis XIV, brooding over his beloved gardens, most heartily approved of this gesture, for, as you know, he was forever honoring in his chateaux and gardens those people who by superior heart or mind or both, he felt should be singled out for especial distinction, and Mrs. Roosevelt's presence would have been sufficient for him to have set the whole Grands Eaux going a mile a minute.

On two occasions I have had the good fortune to see the marvelous display under most favorable circumstances. Of course a goodly number of people always help to give color and motion to the waters themselves, but usually on appointed Sunday afternoons or on Bastille Day, - what a paradox, - the crowds have been more of a tumult which has tended to detract from the combined glories of flowers, trees, water and air. But once I received a telephone in Paris from my friend at the "chateau, telling me on a Friday evening that the following Saturday morning the several systems would be tried out, just to be sure that everything was functioning perfectly for the inauguration of the season on the following Sunday. He and I and a few of the "grand fountainers"

3318

were the only ones present in the lovely early silvery hours in the deserted allees, and the majesty of the great jets and the beauty of their opalescent tints at that hour was marvelous.

On one other occasion, while at the Grand Trianon, the happy idea came gurgling up from out of the tea cups that it would be a splendid idea to try out the Grands Eaux between that hour and the following day when some especial celebration was on the docket. By a bit of telephoning and arranging, it was decided that that same night, after 10:30, would be most favorable, and while it took some "round about" intrigue to effect the concept, it was finally accomplished. Fortunately there was a mellow moon that night, and the night was unusually warm for Versailles in May. The sound of the water gushing from the great jets seemed unusually loud because the sounds of the day were gone, but the subdued effect of light and shade, of dark columns of well ordered trees, deepened and set off by splendid shafts of silvery columns of water was something more telling on the senses than I can express. But I am letting old memories run away with me. Sufficient it is to say, so far as Anne O'Hare McCormick's report is concerned, I can think of no greater honor that any one could receive, - what with the concept of the 17th century as a background, than to have, as Mrs. Roosevelt has had in this instance, the Grands Eaux reunited to throw themselves into an ecstacy of delight in expressing their pleasure at her presence.

On the home front things are rocking along alright, although I haven't been doing much to make things function today. One bit of Voo-dooism came to my attention today.

Aurellia confided to me this noon that, according to Mattie's interpretation, the Madam had visited Aurellia in her sleep last night and had painted a spot, - a big blue-black spot on her leg. According to the more superstitious darkies, - who, come to think of it, never show black and blue spots, - but regardless of that circumstances, mulattoes and white people, it seems, are forever being visited by departed spirits who paint them black and blue.

Aurellia says that she remembers bumping pretty hard into a little low table in the big house but she didn't notice at the time if it discolored her skin. And so she isn't sure if the table of the Madam who gave her some extra coloring during the night. Far be it from me to discourage the survival of the ghost with the paint pot theory, and so Aurellia goes about her appointed tasks, - just a little bit uncertain about the whole business.

Something tells me at this point that I would do ever so well to flatten out, for momentarily I am beginning to feel more and more like Irwin Cobb used to look. I am glad to say, however, that all goes well, and thanks to keeping quiet today, I am sure I have escaped the difficulties following my last go-round. Again my sincerest thanks for your grand letter which I will finish on the morrow...

3319

Tuesday, December 7th, 1948.

Memorandum:

The lights came back on quite unexpectedly last night, just after I had sealed your letter, and so my wayward secretary, kindly though not too dependable, on seeing the restored lights at the saloon, came back and finished your letter.

It was so kind of you to enclose the quotations from Proverbs, and while I shall be happy to pass along one of them to the General, I shall be even happier to treasure the 30th verse all for myself.

Curiously enough I had forgotten long since what the 9th verse had to say, and coming to hand, as it did, on the day I had had ten extractions, I got a huge laugh out of the opening phrase: "Open thy mouth," which at that particular time was the one thing I hadn't dreamed of doing.

I think yours is grand and I shall be having it read over and over to me. I think I once mentioned that Lyle's birthday was September 4th, and verse 4 has something, oddly enough, about drink in it.

And then today came a delightful surprise in the form of another letter, delighting my soul. There were so many tender things expressed in it, that I shall store it away in my memory for always. Isn't it grand, - is there anything grander, - that to know that there are something vibrating between sympathetic hearts that nothing in this world can ever take away. I feel so terribly rich.

You inquire about the food arrangements. The big house goes on just as before, with Mattie cooking, - and soups for me momentarily, and Aurellia, the housegirl, keeping things straight, although I have given much attention to either of them during the past couple of days, - which probably proves that they can function without me, although I think they feel a little more secure if I give them an occasional suggestion.

I am glad you referred to the matter of which Don and Dr. Worsley had spoken to me. I reckon you must have received a memorandum, probably written about last Friday, possibly Thursday, the 30th or 31st.

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3320

giving some details as to the excitement reigning among the gossips in town on the day the Madam died. Please always refer to matters of whatever nature when I forget to jot them down, for it is good to know that you are interested in keep abreast with life here.

In the paragraph above I should have mentioned that I dine at the big house at noon. The two clerks usually eat with me, and there are usually two or three guests, either friends of mine passing this way, business people who chance to be at the store, or whatever. At supper J. H. and I almost always eat together, and sometimes he, Dan, a guest or friend of theirs and I. That part of the domestic arrangement doesn't indicate much change by the "adam's absence, for she had not been coming downstairs for her meals in ever so long.

Did I mention yesterday that I dropped in to the lady doctor's office yesterday to get some anti-pain pills and to meet Celeste who was bringing me home. I had a little chat with the lady doctor, who tells me they have rented the lower floor of the very large house on Front Street, - giving on the river, I believe, - the place occupied for years by the wealthy lady, recently deceased, who left her companion of years the good worth \$18.50. This fine old house is large, and was once a town house of the Bermuda Prudhommes. It's a lovely place but almost larger, - the one floor, that I should imagine they would care for, but apparently I am wrong. Perhaps it will give me some extra employment, and that will be good.

I was so glad this afternoon that Ezra's little boy passed by my door on his way home from school. Sometimes he does and sometimes he doesn't. I found it quite remarkable that he remembered today is his birthday, - born December 7th, 1941, for usually most of our colored children don't know either the year or day on which they first saw the light of day. But Bill remembered, and seemed as happy as a clam when he discovered I had set aside a little bag of candy for him, for I reckon that was about the old birthday present the child got, and heaven knows that wasn't anything.

Mrs. Cunningham of "atchitoches arrived just as Bill was leaving. J. H. says she has the keenest mind of any woman in the Parish, and she is one of those rare combinations of splendid executive and a person of charm. They have a lovely house in town, overlooking the river, too. Once in a while she likes to drop everything and come down to chat, and as her daughter is going to Europe to study this spring, she asked if she might bring her sometime, too. I was so delighted that you had written me about the grand waters at Versailles being played for Mrs. Roosevelt, for Mrs. Cunningham expressed great admiration for the lady in some passing reference, and I was of course delighted to share with her the information of the courtesy extended to the real First Lady of the Democratic administration.

I'm so glad Hugo is responding to his treatments, but twice as glad, need I add, for L. J.'s sake. If your arm continues to give trouble, please save yourself all you can by not writing, and I will understand. As for myself, I, by some miracle, have nothing more to complain about than that the stitches feel mighty odd.....

Miss Nellie 17/3 (2) 3321
Alberta Ramsey 17/5
R.D. 17/6/48
Gertrude R. Switzer 17/7

December 8th, 1948. (Wed.)

Memorandum:

Under separate cover, I am sending a few recent letters.

I guess they all speak for themselves. Miss Nellie is as sweet as ever. Miss Alberta has received some pecaness, but I have not asked that any be sent you, for two reasons; - in the first place, I am not at all certain 908 carries bulky packages, and paradoxically enough, most of the packages sent such a distance fail to arrive in the present packages, what with postal employees, I suspect, neatly cutting little slits in the sacks, so that the contents seemingly all trickle out before reaching their destination. You will enjoy the Shreveport letter. It looks like the blackbirds are coming home to roost. Did I mention that during the past few days I have digested three letters from various friends of Sisters in Shreveport, - all obviously penned at her suggestion. Each has started off as a condolence affair, - somewhat be-lated, it seems to me, - and each ends up with the remark that Sister is ever so fond of me, and it is thought I owe it to her to visit her forthwith. Personally, I don't think I owe Sister anything.

The weather is cold and fair, with a sun that is brilliant but giving no heat. I accordingly am keeping the several dozen crepe myrtle earthed in at Yucca, awaiting a turn in the weather, promised for Thursday or Friday, when a cloudy, warm spell will enable us to get these water melon red and the white crepe myrtles put in their proper places at Arenbourg.

Peter is still mooning about, probably with murder still in the back of his mind, but fortunately his girl friend has taken her several children by a much earlier marriage, to Alexandria for a while, and perhaps the murder-interest will die out before she returns. I shall have Peter help me in planting the new arrivals at Arenbourg, and that employment will do him no harm, and perhaps get him over his murder mania. Somehow it seems to me I can hear the Madam's voice echoing from on high: "I declare, you're a sight, - and all for that worthless nigger."

Well, Victoria's portrait still hangs above my desk, and somebody has to look after her orphan child, and although the task be of little merit, perhaps, I want to do it, for Victoria's sake, Peter's and my own.

1386

3322

Should there ever be any occasion to inquire about any particulars regarding Peter or his brother, the Dark Duke, the code term of "Pierre" or "le Duc Noir" might easily slide by my secretary without him being a y the wiser.

I had thought we were to dine with Paynie in town on Christmas Day, but it turns out all the Henrys, except the Shreveport branch, - possibly, - intend having dinner at the big house. J. H. bought a ten dollar turkey from some local mulatto yesterday, and later in the day, Celeste won a huge gobbler in a raffles. She immediately turned over her winnings to the local priests, and so the Presbyterian Henrys and the Catholic clergy are apparently all provided for, as of dinner on the 25th.

The presence of pilgrims on the local horizon seems remarkably few in number these days, but their absence is made up for by visitors from this and surrounding Parishes, so that the ebb and flow remains about equal. But among my most welcomed guests today was a delegation of three pupils from St. Augustine's Rosenwald School on Little River. They came out to invite me to a gumbo the school is giving on Friday night, and I smiled to myself when I realized how much talk there must have been about the invitation prior to their setting out, since they pointed out there would be a fine moon if I cared to come out on foot, but that if it should be cloudy, or if I preferred to ride, they would be glad to have someone "come and fetch me". The easiest thing I have to do is to stave off invitations from the gentry and from urban big wigs, but I find it ever so difficult to decline these little courtesies from my simple negroes on Little River. I asked them not to send for me and told them I wasn't sure if I would be free to come on Friday night, as a visitor might be here, in which case I would have to remain at home. That feeble excuse seemed better than any other I could trump up off hand. But in response to what I thought was quite a neat and definite side-step, one of my visitors came slap back at me, saying: "Us-es all like your friends, and it don't count if they knows us-es or no. Jus' bring them along to the party anyway I cause if you likes our gumbo, they all sure'll like it, too."

There are a few big old roosters running about the wood lot adjoining the gardens, and I shall have a couple captured on Friday morning, and sent along for the gumbo, but as for my own presence, something tells me I would do well to remain in-doors on these frosty nights. But I shall be thinking of that elegant gumbo about the time the moon rises on Friday night.

But I have left unsaid so many things I had in mind to say when I began this letter, and yet here we are at the end already. But it has been pleasant chatting with you, and the nice thing about tomorrow is that we may pick up the threads again where we left off tonight....

1386

3323

Bachelor 1945

Mina 1945

Rudolph 1946

J.D.L. 1945

Thursday, December 9th, 1948.

Memorandum:

After assuring you yesterday that you would probably get no pecanes this year, a letter comes from Rudolph indicating that he had received some. Since you and he were the only ones I requested pecanes be sent, and since he has received his, I conclude that yours must be on their way to you, but I shall not be at all surprised if you never receive them since the sacks in which they are mailed frankly state that pecanes are inside, and no one very far afield ever seems to get what heads out from here. I hope yours goes through. I had thought in all the excitement attendant upon recent events, the order to ship had been misplaced. But it appears I was wrong, and so, whether they arrive or not, - I believe they are shipped uninsured, you will know we were thinking of you.

Under separate cover I have sent a few more recent letters. Miss Nellie's interpretation of Mary Rhodes' present problems gives one pause for consideration. But for myself, I felt the force of this dual personality before her troubles had reached their present pitch. In the old days, in fact, I used to be just as happy when having dinner at Moane's if she did not appear, for somehow one was always conscious of the strain within her, and it didn't lend itself to the easy flow of conversation. But later I got accustomed to the pleasanter side and succeeded in dismissing the less pleasant, although I suppose it was ever present. I liked your interpretation of her rather contradictory letter, and I agree entirely with you as to the probable cause.

I have met at least one of her sons who is married and has a family. I believe there are others. Isn't too bad they can't somehow assist their parents in this time of difficulties.

I am glad you recalled to mind some of the earlier manifestations in her letters which I had forgotten. I remember I used to get the impression she was upbraiding me for wilfully avoiding Machez when there was no reason on earth, according to her viewpoint, that I should be spending half my time there. What with her friendship for Miss Nellie and my own letters to her, it must have been made ever so plain to her that I had responsibilities at Melrose, but she apparently never let those considerations enter her mind. She is an unusual person, and gifted, too, but is certainly lacking in a largeness of horizon that comprehends limitations others may have in doing just as fancy dictates, while, paradoxically enough, she should be the first to understand, since she herself is hampered by the same restraints.

8388

3324

The couple of letters Mr. Bachelier mentions, I haven't had an opportunity to explore as yet. It will be grand to have the Beaumont Genealogy he mentions, for it is an interesting family. I may have mentioned before that he obtained them from the granddaughter of a very old lady, born a Beaumont, in Natchez prior to the Civil War.

As for Nina's letter, it somehow seems different from what I had expected. Did my reader get his word correct when she referred to me as "naive" at the funeral. I wonder what in the world I could have been up to that gave such an impression. Perhaps I was naive, for I haven't attended many funerals, although I had never supposed before that one had to be other than natural at such times, but perhaps that was my trouble.

It was more generous of her than I would have been, - to have had the Wenks to dinner, but I admire her nobility. What Miss Nellie Regan had to say about Sister's bitterness in regard to us all seems to fit very neatly along side Nina's less explicit but nevertheless telling observations regarding Sister's present attitude. Of course her present puzzle stems from this: - all her life she has ridden rough shod over everyone, - and has been able to get away with it because of everyone's love for her mother. Now that her mother has gone, Sister is so dumb she still thinks she can continue to ride rough shod over everyone, - and is both perplexed and furious on discovering there is at long last a limit beyond which she cannot thunder without experiencing a little normal reaction from the people of whom she has so long taken advantage. I think she would be quite incapable of understanding that very excellent phrase that at present begins to open in her case: "The mills of the gods grind slowly, but they grind exceedingly fine."

Obviously from Adolph's letter, and more subtly from Mr. Bachelier's, I gather that both are poised to head out for Melrose at the vaguest hint or a nod. As you know, I am very fond of them both, but I have no doubt you will appreciate my feelings under present physical circumstances and the ebb and flow of callers, not to mention gardening at Renbourg and Melrose, that I should be just as happy if they would delay honoring me for a little while. The line in Mr. Commer's letter the other day filled me with astonishment regarding Mr. Belle's impending visit, for I haven't heard from him in ages. I must have made some error in my letter to Natchez that produced a false impression. If I can only maintain my present course without visitors, - overnight affairs, - until after the first of the year, I shall be thankful.

Today, being Nipmayer Day, the good doctor came by for an hour in the morning. We had a pleasant little chat but he offered nothing of particular news. He said he had just finished "Game A Cavalier" by Frances Parkinson Keyes, - a story laid near Liseux, in Normandy during the invasion, or pre-invasion period, and had liked it immensely. I should imagine I shouldn't have to read it. If this letter reads exceedingly stupid, don't lay it on my state of health for I am feeling fine. I wish so much you might be able to say as much for your own good self....

8388

Sister 1/8 3325
Lucy Reguolds 1/8

Friday, December 10th, 1948.

Memorandum:

The weather is chill, but all blue and gold. The impulse to put things in order, - inside and out, remains strong but the progress is leisurely.

I saw Paynie at the Post office this morning. He says his wife, Frances, is reading "The Friends of Joe Gilmore", which is news to me, since I didn't know it was out yet. He tells me the chapter covering my doings in Natchez has been eliminated. Thank Heavens.

Mattie, the cook, who figures in a Melrose story in the book, is still the cook. At dinner time today, I discovered she had been too busy washing clothes for her children to bother to make mushroom soup. Under present circumstances, I can manage soup so much more readily than pork chop. I am prejudiced in favor of the soup, which one half hour before dinner was reported as being in the pot. It appears I shall have to bear down a little heavier on the culinary department, if I am to get my favorite foods, and I propose to get them.

The enclosures speak for themselves, and you may readily imagine the responses going forward by the next post, with a special emphasis on the invitation for Christmas and for the elegiac blanket. I gather the bag is leaping to see me in hopes of getting dirt, - or if not getting it, at least to be able to mis-quote me. Nothing short of coming to Melrose for Christmas seems to stand in the way of her determination. I have no doubt just the faintest suggestion of persuasion would send her flying in this direction for the 25th, but such a straw will not be tossed out by me. Of course there is always the chance that without a urge from anyone, she will end up by taking the greatest delight in trying to throw a flurry into the dove cote by blowing in quite unexpectedly. What will be alright, too, what with the Supreme Court out of session, but for the peace and quiet of everyone, let us hope she sticks to her determination not to come.

Another unpleasant commentary on certain aspects of human nature comes from the Crescent City. Sister wrote Celeste asking where she could get a glossy print, similar to the one of her mother appearing in the Natchitoches paper at the time of the funeral. I told Celeste Frances Benjamin Johnston

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was the photographer, and that, were I in her place, I would recommend to Sister that she write here direct at 1088 Bourbon Street, New Orleans. Following that suggestion, it seems that Dan had some other and that Celeste is all mixed up in some kind of a business, wit Sister screaming in one direction, Dan in another and so on. I am not interested in all that, but I was amused to learn that in response to somebody's letter, Frances Benjamin Johnson repounded to somebody that she would be able to supply glossy prints from her negative at \$5.00 per print. I think that is rather hilarious since "S. B.", as the Madam was wont to refer to her, was a guest in this house for days on end, - possibly ten, and succeeded in being the most cantankerous one we had ever known. I reckon the picture of the Madam is alright, but from what I could glean of it, it wasn't much of a portrait, except as it might suggest Whistler's Mother, in an "a la Watteau" setting. For myself, I never saw the Madam in her garden relaxed as in this particular picture, which I assisted in persuading her to pose for at the time "S. B." was here. When ever the Madam was in her garden, - and I regret to say so, she was always as busy as a bee, flying from weed to weed, or from flower to flower, but never in the reposed attitude of the picture. Why anybody should have to have a glossy print, anybody who knew the Madam, I cannot imagine, but however the bags want to go into a tangle about it is perfectly alright with me.

I have with infinite pleasure denounced "S. B." - both in the Madam's behalf and in my own, and so far as I am concerned, that denunciation can stand forthwith and forever more, and no matter how much or how little she asks for the prints of the pictures she took of her hostess while a guest in this house, it doesn't matter in the slightest to me, for by her price, disregarding past courtesies and hospitality, she does more to establish her own portrait than anything her old camera ever recorded of anyone else.

And I guess that is about all I have to aim in her direction at this sitting.

I got around to read the Beaumont letter today, and it is a very interesting one, written in July, 1848, from Matchez, with much talk about various members of the family, the desire to have a brass cannon cast to celebrate the return of the volunteers, - obviously from the Mexican War of 1846, and so on. I am sending it to Miss Wellie for her temporary delectation, and notes, for there are some people mentioned in the letter on whom she has done considerable research. When she returns it, I shall forward the same, with notations to you.

And Lord here we are at the end of the page, and it seems as though we are scarcely started. I am keeping my fingers crossed for warm weather on the morrow, in hopes of doing something about the crepe myrtles at Arenbourg, but if circumstances aren't favorable, next week will provide the proper accoutrements.....

3327

December 11th, 1948. - Saturday.

Memorandum: I have just received a letter from Sister, dated December 11th, 1948. It is a very interesting letter, and I am sending it to Miss Wellie for her temporary delectation, and notes, for there are some people mentioned in the letter on whom she has done considerable research. When she returns it, I shall forward the same, with notations to you.

Well, Lord! Have mercy. Imagine me writing on Saturday.

My reasons are two fold; - first because I had such nice mail from you today, that I feel the impulse to thank you forthwith; and secondly, quite a few people are threatening to head in this way to orrow evening, and if they do, it may be late before the last of them have gone on their way, so perhaps this Saturday's epistle will have to serve for my usual Sunday one.

It was so good of you to write so sympathetically regarding the second of the trip-hammer blows of Death that fell on me in mid November. The full impact of the first blow, however, left me so stunned emotionally that the full force of the second has caught up with me yet. The news up to now of the second disaster is still meager in almost every detail. I believe it occurred on the 11th, but by some mechanical or human failure, I didn't receive the news until after the full force of Aunt Cammie's death had swept over me.

Eventually, I suppose, the normal actions and re-actions will reach me, - both as to facts and my own emotional response. But to tell you the truth, the whole thing still seems so remote and unbelievable, I still find the mere fact bouncing off my heart almost like hail stones from a tin roof. Then, too, I suspect there is just a little of that Ida Mazurette element in the whole business. You may recall everyone was so sorry for her when she broke her leg, was hauled off to the hospital, and brought back home the same day. But when, after the departure of the ambulance, she fell from her husband's arms as she was being carried up stairs, breaking the other leg, not even the hospital would believe the news when a second hurried telephone call was put through. I reckon it wasn't so very funny for poor Ida, but for everybody else it did seem like a little too much all for one sitting, and whenever Aunt Cammie and I ever thought of it, we invariably rolled on the floor together.

A little later, I should like to return to the matter in question, but momentarily I shall let it slide by.

How nice of you and L. J. to be thinking of me in reference to another problem, and how good of you both to send me words of advice, encouragement and moral support. My dentist is really very good. J. H. is one of his clerks, and so is Dr. Eleanor, who is a personal friend. During these difficult sessions, I have been ever so fortunate to have the attention of such a good

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dentist and doctor, for the one has followed up the other in professional attention. And in the same breath may I tell you how touched I am by your unfailing kindness in re-assuring me that a friend in need is a friend in deed, - so often proven by our own good self in the past, and evidence piled on evidence in every passing week. Fortunately everything required is being attended to, and now, if I will only do my part, cooperating physically with the surgeon-dentist, then everything will come along fine. But for your unfailing thoughtfulness, may I again say thanks, and thanks again.

And further may I thank you for your kindness in transcribing Anita's letter for me. Frankly, I haven't gotten to read it as yet, for I concentrated only on the more pressing items today, but I am hoping to get to it tomorrow morning before visitors head in this way.

And so you have seen "The Friends of Joe Gilmore". Aren't then end papers nice, - Melrose and Yucca. And I am glad on page 39 they included the sketch of my living room, although I guess you had seen that sufficiently to be acquainted with it in Caroline Ramsey's picture.

In the Sudam sketch of Yucca, made from the White Garden side (North), you may notice 2 doors and 2 windows giving on the gallery. I am sitting writing this letter by the door at the extreme left of the picture. The window next to it (right) is where my bed stands. The next window right, and the door, are both in the living room. My bath is at the extreme left of the house and a guest bedroom at the extreme right. I am so glad you have these illustrations for they may perhaps better enable you to visualize my domestic arrangements.

The picture, - photograph, - of the front gallery, shows one step, leading into my living room. Further along is another, which I can't make out, but is next to the little table by the other door, further along the gallery. My big yellow cat sleeps on the table nightly, and good coad Nora on the doorstep to my bedroom.

I understand the captions refer to this original Yucca plantation home as a "cabin". I wonder if people think Southern cabins are generally like this one. That it was once used as a hospital is true, following the building of Melrose in 1833, but many visitors here think this "cabin" was built as a hospital, which would certainly have been a gesture in the grand manner in this sparsely settled region in the 1760's when the original Yucca residence was erected. When J. H. and the General asked me to accept Yucca as my home, it naturally never occurred to me you would so soon have an opportunity to see the sketches so beautifully executed by Sudam, but what things spilling one on top of the other in such rapid succession during the recent weeks, anything might happen, and perhaps I may even get caught up with my mail. Again my most heartfelt thanks for your kind letters, every word of which echoes and re-echoes in my soul....

E. W. Moore 11/28
Lucy Morgan 11/28
3329

Sunday, December 17th, 1948.

Memorandum:

A busy day, sunny and warm, with too many visitors, and all at the same time. But we made it alright, and I hope everyone left comparatively happy.

There were so many personal things to touch on in yesterday's note that I believe I failed to mention very much about planting, if any.

After a chilly Friday, Saturday dawn pleasantly warm, and in spite of a fairly heavy schedule, it seemed good that first consideration should be given our Arenbourg children.

Peter passed this way early, and armed with spade, he accompanied me to the region of the elephant traps, where I measured off semi-circles, where holes were to be dug.

Later in the morning, I galloped back, dragging with me flocks of watermelon red and white crepe myrtles, which we set out under most favorable conditions, what with the warmth and the high humidity, and the ground already adequately damp. Before noon half a hundred had been placed in their permanent locations, and with a promise of rain in the offing, I am quite sure everything planted will have a good chance to take hold well.

Tonight the moon is wading through muttermilk clouds, and before dawn I feel certain I shall awaken to hear a gentle patter of rain outside, and I shall be grateful for our sakes and for the newly established Arenbourg children.

All today's visitors contrived to arrive at about the same hour during the afternoon, so that I turned in thought to the Madam's famous line:

"Only two people can talk."

The people I liked best were the Rands who had a guest with them who was perfectly enchanted with the place, somebody from the veteran's bureau, I believe.

Mrs. Rand brought a huge box of soft candies and sandwiches

3330

for me to work on whenever I felt the impulse, and they insisted that I accompany them and their guest, - and one of their sons, to "atchitoches for supper. But as I already had other guests on my hands I had to decline, of course.

Mrs. Rand also brought me the gayest doll for my desk. It is a colored preacher, perhaps a foot tall, with black and white checkered trousers, black frock coat and tall high hat. Somehow he suggests the usual cartoon of the spirit of prohibition. He is holding a Bible in his hands and wears the most angelic expression on his face. It is really a knock out, and doubly so when one turns him around, for stuffed down the back of his trousers is a white chicken, its head and one wing protruding from behind the swallow tail coat, clearly suggesting the preacher has been up to other business before exhorting his flock on Biblical subjects.

The other visitors included people from neighboring Parishes, - old friends dropping in for a little chat and the pleasure of walking about the gardens, which are practically without flowers at the moment. But it was nice seeing them, even though their tour, from a floral point of view didn't amount to much.

Among my colored friends came Dee-dee, who wanted me to write a letter to his boy, Attrice, who has been on a plantation near Shreveport during the past year. Attrice wants to come back to Little River, and Dee-dee, having just bought himself a tractor from J. H. with his cotton money, is anxious to have his stalwart offspring join the rest of the clan, including the Dark Duke, his son-in-law, "little" Robert, and so on, to start things moving for next season's crop.

I was glad to see Ezra today, too. He is having domestic difficulties again and wanted to talk about them, and he wanted to ask me if his children, dropping by to see me on their way home from school, "worried" me by stopping in. He said Bill marched home on the 7th, proud as could be with his little bag of candy, which had come to him as a birthday present. Ezra said he had to laugh when he saw the child with the birthday present, for he had warned him not to stop to see me when I am so busy, but, Ezra confessed, he was glad for once the child had disobeyed him, he seemed so happy in his prize.

So runs out the day, and so unwinds an unusually dull Memo. But it has been pleasant chatting with you for a little while, and I trust you will forgive me extreme dullness. Bright and early on the morrow I got to town to have some stitches removed, and so begins another week. Do hope you have had some rest this week end, for from here on out, until the holidays are finished, I know you are going to be terribly busy.

Take care

3331

Monday, December 13th, 1948.

Just for fun, let's put the cart before the horse, and so take up the New Year before he begin on Christmas.

Suely, today being the 13th, had nothing to do about it, but regardless I headed out this morning bright and early to have my stitches removed. Thank the Lord that is over. But,-- the dentist discovered a couple of excessive bone formations on my jaw, and after the beginning of January, I shall have to have the gums slit open and the bone formations chistled out. Sounds pretty, doesn't it. Well, there is no great loss without some small gain, - to wit, - that the dentist tells me such jobs are usually taken care of in a Shreveport hospital, but with the aid of Dr. Eleanor, he believes the matter can be handled in Matchitoches alright. I need not say that I am grateful for that, what with all the implications the mere name of Shreveport suggests. And now I am done with the Happy New Year prospects, and let's get on to Christmas.

Starting off in the same mail with this letter goes forward a mailing tube containing your Christmas present. It is an oil of Melrose which I commissioned little Miss Alberta to do last May. She began it while here and took it to New Orleans where I asked her to have it framed when finished, - in so thing like a three inch plain white frame. After she left, it occurred to me that the frame would require the thing to be packed in a wooden case, and that Santa Claus might find some difficulty in getting down your chimney with it. I wrote her therefore not to have it framed and so she brought the canvas back with her and finished it here in September.

Then came word you were having your apartment done over, and I was glad I had not had a frame put on the thing, for if you decide to have it framed now, perhaps the white might not go well with your decoration. And so there the matter stands, and although the picture is no masterpiece, it may serve as a pleasant suggestion of home in the Southland, and while artists from afar might well have done better, it seemed to me that the work of little Miss Alberta, so long associated with painting in Louisiana, might also mean more to the owner of the picture, even though the artistry isn't up to Grant Wood Benton standards.

Be that as it may, the thing is merely symbolic anyway, for all I want the thing to tell you is what you already know and what I need not set down here, save to add that I hope it will contribute a little to making your Christmas the happier.

3332

Thanks to your kindness in making the transcript of the Dusseldorf letter, I got to read Anita's message today. How right you were in referring to the sensation naturally welling up within one on reading it, of poor Anita like a bird flapping its wings furtively to escape from the bars of its cage. It recalled the four final lines of Shelley's final poem, the two lines of which I cannot remember in their proper wording, and the next to the last two but imperfectly:

"And I could lie down like a tired child,
And weep away this life of care which I have borne
And yet must bear....."

But it is heartening to notice a glimmer of hope still within her breast, - that her husband is growing up. I am so glad she has that hope, although I am very doubtful on my part if husbands ever do grow up, - but of course there are always miracles.

I shall reply to her shortly, - possibly later tonight, possibly within a week, - and if it not impossible too much on your good nature, I shall avail myself of your friendly offer of times past to let you transmit my message along with yours whenever you chance to be writing, for it is obviously too late to get a line through to her before Christmas anyway.

I thought of Mrs. de Stael today, and that remarkable ability of hers to describe so perfectly a place she didn't know existed that she was quite overwhelmed when a decade following the publication of the description of the valley somewhere in Switzerland, the towns people did her great honor when she chanced to be passing that way for having given the finest description of their region which had ever been penned. What made me think of her was the reaction of a number of negroes who chanced to pass by Yucca today and who in every case were simply enchanted with my negro preacher "rs. Rand brought me yesterday. Each one took a good look at the man and thereupon declared:

"That's pure Reverend Dudley, - hands face and feet." The adjective doesn't indicate the Reverend was beyond visiting a chicken coop before reaching his pulpit, but rather that the resemblance is perfect. They were delighted, and of course I was doubly so.

In today's post came a gift from Hastings House, - The Friends of Joe Gilmore, - and I am glad to have it as my own, for now I can assemble a few select friends, perhaps Mr. Brew to read and Ezra and the Dark Duke, and we shall have a gay sitting, running through the murder by Sam Pease and so on. --But here I am run out of soap, so to speak before really getting started, - it is so pleasant, these little chats at the close of day....

3333

Tuesday, December 14th, 1948.

Memorandum:

May I tell you that the post man rang twice today, having brought me both a letter and a smart looking "object of Trianon".

But I have opened neither the one nor the other, for the postman had car trouble and arrived later than his usual hour of 10, so that the plantation bell tapped out the afternoon summons for the laborers, including my secretary, before he and I had an opportunity to establish contact with my precious items. They are accordingly resting in my armchair until the morning, and tonight's sleep will be the happier because of their presence.

The weather tended to make today ever so oppressive, what with the humidity near 100 and the thermometer in the 80's. But while it was too warm for human beings busy with one thing or another, it was grand for the children at Arenbourg, who certainly are getting off at a most auspicious start.

Among the things which got in the way of the big broom today while another section of the big house was being put in order were about a million small pieces of ticking, - averaging around 3 inches by five. I could think of no possible use for them but Mattie said she would like them to make a mattress, sewing the pieces together in the matter of patchwork for the covering. It seemed like a strange idea, but I guess she was determined on it, for this evening I heard her asking the stock man to send her a bale of hay which she intends to use for stuffing. Really, that ought to be some mattress to look at, but for myself, I would rather not try sleeping on it if you don't mind.

My friend, Dee-de, came to see me this evening. Like all the rest of my colored friends, - the negroes, - he was enchanted by the Reverend Dudley, - "rs. Rand's gift of Sunday. Probably the Rosenwald type of negro might find it too much of a caricature, but fortunately the Cane River-Little River negroes haven't been built up into unhappiness, and they love the preaching-Reverend for his undeniable gaiety, and when he is turned around and they discover the rooster sticking out of the seat of his pants, they invariably go into gales of laughter.

Dee-dee said he visited his son, Attice Anthony, on the plantation near Shreveport where he has been for the past year. I believe you have a snapshot of Attice, and may recall

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that he always reminds me of a sepia rendition of Max Schemling. It seems that Attrice has had enough of the big outside world and is moving back to Little River to stay next week, I believe.

In Monday's mail were letters from Mobina and Dora, along with a personal note, asking for some signatures, etc., to wind up matters evolving from the event of parallel nature that happened elsewhere about the time we were having a funeral at Melrose, too. I inadvertently destroyed the other two letters with the other which I wished disposed of, but I think there was nothing of particular interest in the Shreveport and Norman dispatches. Dora did mention having seen some reference to the final Saxon opus, but I reckon he hadn't run across the book as yet.

Tonight I had supper a little later than usual, perhaps 6:30. "either" A. nor Dan came home and so I ate alone, and liked it. But when I left the big house for Yucca, the moon was so bright, I couldn't resist the inclination to make a little turn on the terrace at Arenbourg, which was delicious, both in the damp mellowness of the air and the softness of the moonlight. To my surprise, on entering the Alphonse gate, I heard my old friend, the mocking bird, singing for dear life off in the cottonwood on the margin of the river. He must have heard my close the gate, for he put in an appearance almost before I had headed along the pear-persimmon avenue, hopping and skipping a couple of feet ahead of me, which I am quite used to his doing in the day time when I am spading about, but I think this is the first time I remember a bird of his size venturing afoot on the ground a couple of hours after sunset. He is certainly a friendly little fellow and it is good that he and Dora the Airdale seem to be on the friendliest of terms, too, with neither ever getting into the other's perruque. The mocking bird lingered with me so long as I remained on the terrace and then hopped and jumped back as far as the Alphonse gate where he must have flown back to his former perch in the cottonwood, for by the time I had reached the Bermuda Road, I could hear him again pouring out his heart to the moonbeams, and at the sound of his voice, Dora seemed to jump and frolic and I found myself as gay as a cricket making my way back to Yucca.

On the supply and demand, - and dare I say transportation - front, Station K A I B (and F M), ordered between 40 and 50 sacks of pecanes from Melrose to be sent to various officials of the American Broadcasting System in New York, Chicago and so on. In view of the fact that the sacks in several other instances, leave here with full weight but arrive at their destination only partially filled, - or fail to arrive at all, - I hope the A B C officials are counting on getting too fat on this commodity. And the next time you hear something sounding like static over your A B C station, don't lay it all on electrical disturbances of the atmosphere, for perhaps it will merely be Elmer Davis having a go at a pecane.....

Essae Dec 12/13
3335

8888

Wednesday, December 15th, 1948.

Memorandum:

I'm writing in the dark, so if my margins appear unusually out of whack, don't be alarmed.

After hauling lumber all day, my secretary got around to Yucca about an hour after sundown. I am delighted we made the first page before the electric current suddenly failed, at just the point where you mentioned that comparative freedom last week afforded you an opportunity to hand Uncle Sam a box to deliver in Santa's behalf. The box rests safely in my armchair, and if will power persists, it will remain there for another week, although my memory is still quite green in how my will power crumbled last May at the mention of Marly.

The clouds aren't behaving nicely at all tonight, for they have thrown a blanket over the full moon. Otherwise, what with a balm South breeze blowing and the thermometer at 80, I might have moved my machine out on my gallery where with the help of the cats and good old Dora, I might be writing along merrily in the moonlight.

My secretary waited a while for the current to be restored, but I finally sent him on home. He is pretty busy these days, for he confides in me that he is fixing to marry next week, and so is busy with little affairs at home after his day's work. He will be back on the morrow to finish your letter, which I always hold for assistance from him exclusively, although non-descript things, like the enclosure, I grab off anyone to run through. I had Celeste read me one from Sister in this morning's post, - another invitation to spend the holiday's in Shreveport. What a persistent bag she is. She remarked she was going to Dallas today to shop at Neiman-Marcus store in that city, - a fine store, as I understand it, but one that wouldn't require me to make such a journey during the Christmas rush.

I think it kind of you not to have been too bored with me for having gone to such lengths about my enthusiasm for your mention of Madam Roosevelt at Versailles, and my own memoirs of the fountains playing at times when there were no crowds. I learned from a late news dispatch on Sunday night, I believe it was, that she had just flown in to New York from Paris, and somehow I felt ever so happy about that. I am under the impression, -

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although it may have stemmed from a wish on my part, - that sometime back she planned to bring out a volume, following in sequence of time, her earlier volume, "This Is My Story", - a volume that would cover the White House years. I am wondering if you ever heard of such a plan, possibly announced in the press, - or did I merely dream it. In a way, I suppose her daily columns over those years covered much that a book might be expected to hold between its covers, although I am sure there were many personal opinions of events and personalities during those years which circumstances made it impossible for her to set down at the time.

Among today's callers were Dr. Rand and Mrs. Rand's brother, Horace White. They have both long been interested in the little cannon under the big oak in the front garden. It was used during the Colfax, La., race riots in 1873, - Colfax being on the opposite (East) bank of Red River some 20 miles below here. Lots of people like to examine it, and many of them usually leave the thing tilted up in the air which, at this season of the year, gives the barrel a chance to get filled with water, with always a chance that at a sudden freeze might crack the historic old field piece. The wheels of the cannon always fascinate Dr. Rand, - and worry him a little, too, for they are obviously make-shift affairs, for originally the cannon was mounted without wheels on the deck of a gun boat which sailed up Red River to quell the riots. On arriving in the Colfax (hill-billy) neighborhood, the naval forces discovered the recalcitrant negroes were too far from shore to be fired at effectively, and accordingly some old plough wheels were rounded up, and the make-shift gun carriage contrived. But apparently the thing was a great success for scores of negroes were killed and the gunboat slipped back down to the Mississippi in bloody glory, without ever anyone being able to explain how it was that the cannon was left behind. I suppose it was perhaps left as a weapon in the hands of the local carpet baggers or whoever were in control following the riots.

Well, after all that talk, I might say that Mr. White asked if he might make a wooden cap, painted the gun metal color of the barrel, to slip over the end of the thing to keep out the rain, and so our old field piece will thus get a new lease on life.

Twice during the above paragraph, the lights have blinked on and off, so I assume there must be some vitality threatening to flood the wires again shortly, and if so, I shall eventually turn on my radio, just in case something should happen, and so fold up my beard. Tonight is supposed to be movie night at the Melrose Social Club. Something tells me beer bottles have got a better chance at things tonight than any of those horse operas that are so popular on the local screen. From the feeling of this paper, I must be about run out, and so I'll fold forthwith, and glad tomorrow I shall have the pleasure of finishing your nice letter....

3337

Tridell 7/14
Dora 7/13

Thursday, December 16th, 1948.

Memorandum:

It was grand to read the balance of your letter, and its genuine excellence made even the impatience of my waiting worth while.

I am perfectly delighted with your account of your occasional walk across 59th Street, and your account of doings along the street and in the adjoining park thoroughly elevated my soul. It will be nice on fine days, thinking of you along about your usual hour in the morning for this little "constitutional", and I am sure your whole day must seem the richer when these little jaunts are possible.

Oddly enough, I still haven't read any of the Madam's obituaries, and so your account of that appearing in the "atchitoches" paper was all news and altogether interesting.

It goes without saying that I am terribly curious to explore the contents of my Christmas box, but up to the present moment I am having difficulty restraining my impulses, and particularly in regard to the item which you say will fill me with merriment. If I can retain self control, I am going to stave off my consuming desire to break the cord that binds up the package until Christmas Eve, but if I weaken, as well I may, I shall make my confessions forthwith.

Today, being Knipmayer Day, the good doctor came by for his little glass of wine. He didn't have any particular news, although he did delight me with an account of his "elrose clinic" this morning which seemed to be limited to two patients. Oddly enough, they were two unmarried young negresses, each with a small baby, and sharing the same cabin. Oddly enough, too, although they are no kin, their names are both Mary Lee Williams. To facilitate keeping his records more readily comprehensible, Dr. Knipmayer suggested that they really should have nick names which he could insert with their real names. To his great satisfaction, the young women said they did have, and the first one said her nickname was Molly. Dr. Knipmayer accordingly made the appropriate notation and turning to the second, inquired her nickname. You can picture his surprise when the second one giggled a little and explained: "Thye calls me Molly, too."

3338

From Dora's letter, I take it the spirit of Christmas must be abroad up Oklahoma way. With the week end so close upon us, I shall have to be-stir myself on the morrow and round up a bale of Spanish moss to get headed in his direction or it will never reach the bag he refers to before the holiday season is over. I think I had better remind Dora to tell the bag not to spray the stuff with gasoline as did the negroes in Roane's Club in Natchez years ago when 200 of them were suffocated by the stuff in a flash blaze of ten minute duration.

And I'm glad Dora is wrong in assuming that the things along the Arenbourg drive had been killed by last year's dry weather. All I'm worried about in that direction is that the present heat wave may start them to growing so that a sudden freeze might catch the sap up and explode the smaller branches.

I am glad you and Dora both liked the idea of Aunt Mary's son writing the letter of confidence. As one runs over in his mind a list of those who did write and those who did not, one is struck by the fact that many names one might naturally expect to find in the column of those who did write do not appear, while, as in the case of Aunt Mary's son, people of sympathetic heart un actually unknown, rise to the occasion so nobly. Characteristically, and as was to be expected since no one there ever writes, Natchez came through with very few notes. I remember how many years it took me to really understand that failure on the part of many of my best friends there to take pen in hand really indicated no lapse in friendship or no intended slight, but merely a silent expression that all was left to mental telepathy and that the squirrels were too busy, whizzing around in their revolving cages to take time out to set fingers to typewriter or quill. Devereux, Windy Hill, Elmscourt, Cherokee and so on down the list Stange, kindly but somewhat careless people, all of whom would profit not at all by receiving, say, a photostat of the letter from old Aunt Mary's son.

On the home front, both on the plantation and inside the garden hedges, things are whirling along at the usual pre-holiday pace. Mitrates are be spread far and wide through the peane groves and tractors are churning up the soil in the cotton fields, planting the cover crop of clover and peas, to be ploughed back under in February.

I have had quite a few visitors today which have hampered other matters I wanted to concentrate on particularly. J. H. sent me a couple of men before breakfast and I have kept them pretty busy all day, putting some of the major wrecks in the gardens back in order, hauling potatoes, - long since forgotten, from the cool brick floor of the African House and washing down the walls and floors of the place.

I certainly don't have to think about taking sleeping pills these days, and if you will pardon me, I shall leap from this chair to a hot bath, and so to my d wny couch, - and may you be getting your share of sleep

Avalon Astor
1710
Childred(?) 1715

3339

Friday, December 17th, 1948.

Memorandum:

A nice slow gentle rain all day, with the thermometer in the 50's, and everything atmospheric just perfect for the Arenbourg children.

Something quite unexpected, by all means timely and altogether hilarious turned up today while Aurellia and I were trying to smooth out some of the chaos in one of the rooms on the second floor of the big house. Automatically I thought of what merriment you and the Madam and I would had had, should the three of us been together, for we most certainly rolled on the floor in convulsions. Aurellia was concentrating on an accumulation of the ages, stored away in three bookcases, two desks and an armoire in the right tower room and I was giving her the nod as to what should be returned to its original place, set aside to be given away or merely bruned. In the midst of all the helter-skelter business, Aurellia drew from a desk pigeon hole a very fat sealed envelope for me to examine. Imagine my delight when on opening it, out tumbled not one complete set but two complete sets of false teeth.

Alright.....

But while on the subject of artificial teeth, - and this time quite seriously, I wonder if I ever mentioned that remarkable set of plates the Madam's mother, Miss Leudivine possessed. In 1852, during that terrific summer of the yellow fever scourge in Louisiana, little Leudivine Erwin, then aged 13, had all her teeth extracted by David McKitterick's father, then a dentist in Baton Rouge, who traveled to Shade Grove to attend to the Erwin children. Whatever possessed either the dentist or the child's parents, - the Isaac Erwins, heaven alone knows, - perhaps it was the somewhat ostentatious influence of the vast colonade period, but be that as it may, after the child's teeth had been extracted, she was provided with a set of plates of solid gold. I gasp every time I think of it, not only because of the effect of an Arabian sunset which the child must have produced every time she smiled, but also at the tremendous burden it must have been, carrying such heavy instruments constantly on or in one's person. Often has the Madam remarked upon it, and how poor was such material in such matters as weight and as conductor of heat and cold. When little Miss Leudivine grew older and a larger set was accordingly required, the gold set was abandoned, and much to the relief and satisfaction, I imagine, of the poor victim. I think the matter is worth mentioning, however,

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as it is the only case I ever heard of that paralleled it.

The in-coming mail continues rather heavy, but I have opened only a few letters today, for my secretary was busy hauling wood from Little River and apparently got bogged down with his tractor during the afternoon, what with all the dampness about. And so I left the major assortment until tomorrow, - including one from Robina, I notice, and one from Helen Aldwin. A couple of non-descript are enclosed herewith. I thought the clipping might lend itself to your collection.

Voodoo-dooism and card cutting are to the fore again. My negro friends tell me the assistant overseer, Teddy, the white youth from Manhattan, tends to court the colored ladies on occasion, although he inclines toward philandering and doesn't remain constant to any particular one. For some time, Mattie, the cook, has seemingly been distressed because he doesn't drop by her house any more, and Aurellia, - a virgin if ever there was one, tells me that Mattie is quite jealous of her if Mr. Red ever speaks to her. It was his custom to pass by the kitchen for a cup of coffee once in a while, but of late, he has let the kitchen, Mattie and the coffee slide, while spending some of his spare time courting Mattie's sister, Maybelle. Peter doesn't like that because he is supposed to be Maybelle's unwedded husband, and Mattie is furious, not with Reddy but with her sister, Maybelle, for luring R. Baranowsky away from her. And with all this mix up, Mattie took the afternoon off yesterday to pay a visit to Miss Adele, the mulatto cutter of cares, who is supposed to be able through that medium to provide excellent advice to the love lorn, - a two dollars a card cut. Today Mattie seemed ever so much happier, so I take it Miss Adele and her performance and assurances must have seemed altogether promising and worth while to Mattie. When I passed by the kitchen on my way to supper tonight, I noticed Mattie was shaking black pepper in her shoes. Heaven alone knows what else, on Miss Adele's recommendation, she is adding to her foot gear and what kind of magic on strings may be concealed about her neck. Sometimes I glance at the portrait of Marie Leveau, the New Orleans Voodoo Queen who made a million dollars by her practices in the 1870's and 1880's, - a remarkable fortune for the period and the locality, - and I find it wonderful to realize that the same old trade goes merrily on today in these parts.

Every night I think I shall get around to doing a bit of reading, but I either skip the whole thing or, on attempting, fall asleep in my chair. Eventually I propose to get caught up with sleep and then start in on brushing up the literary trends, and that will be something to look forward to with pleasure.

Mrs. Horace H. White 1716
Rudolph 1718

3341

Sunday, December 19th, 1948.

Memorandum:

A comparatively quiet week end, with rain and fog on Saturday and sunshine and pleasantly cool weather today.

The enclosures speak for themselves, the one being from Mrs. Rand's mother, a grand old lady of the a te bellum type, and the other, of course, is from Helen. You will get a big kick out of her enumerations as to difficulties encountered in having tried to keep up with little Miss Ramsey. I know precisely how she feels, for I ran into the same blank walls, - but being less noble and far less persistent, I just let the whole attempt drop until that passenger pigeon makes up her mind to roost in some semi-permanent spot.

I hadn't expected Pat to come home for the holidays until Tuesday or Wednesday, but he arrived Saturday afternoon. He came over to see me and asked me if I had seen the upstairs in the big house, it looked so wonderful and fresh and airy. I told him, with a laugh, that any mantle piece would probably give the impression it might take wings if, after half a century, a couple of bushel baskets had been removed, - filled with odds and ends that had accumulated down through the years. But naturally I was glad he liked the appearance of the place and thought Aurellia had done a swell job.

On Saturday I was struck by the coincidence that two negroes, - Peter in the morning and Puny in the afternoon, both expressed the same wish regarding the weather for Christmas Day. What with dampness being inclined toward claminess in this area, and negroes not liking the cold, I was struck by the statement they both made: "I hopes next Saturday, - that's Christmas ain't it, - that it will be cloudy with a little rain at least before day, 'cause to get the real feel 'an hour's interruption in this letter) - 'cause it really ain't got the feel of 'hristmas if it ain't sloppy."

I had never thought about it before, - when a million crooners are sighing for a White Christmas, which probably doesn't mean a thing to the Louisiana negroes hearing that sentiment expressed over the air. Seldom does it snow in Louisiana anyway in December, and apparently the dampness and clouds in Dixie, with liberal mud puddles here and there, somehow typifies the Christmas atmosphere with which darkies, brown and bred here associate with a genuine Noel. But if I ever turn on my radio at this season and hear some Paul Robeson shinging, "I'm dreaming of a sloppy Christmas", I am going to pass out.

3342

In the paragraph above, I was interrupted when Pat came to ask me to have supper at J. M.'s, and although I didn't care to eat anything, I went over to sit with them and chat for a while.

I can't recall if I had already mentioned Charles in this letter or not, and so I shall run the risk of repeating myself. Paynie tells me he saw Charles last week and that he looks much as formerly, but remains flat on his back. Ida has not yet told him of Aunt Cammie's death, and so is busy as a bee, censoring all in-coming mail, - letters, newspapers, etc., and asking people who come not to mention that event to Charles. She says she feels the money being spent of Christian Science readers might much better be devoted to medical care, but Charles is adamant on that point and will have no doctor. Sometimes he declines to eat certain food that Ida has prepared for him, imagining he detects an aroma of some drug or medicine which he feels she may have introduced into the food before serving. Poor Ida, it must be a difficult and nerve wracking task, but I should think she could lighten some of the burden by gently letting Charles know about the Madam, and thus save her the censoring and hush-hush demands on her time and strength.

One of the most ridiculous manifestations of Christmas that has come to my attention in many a moon bobbed up in a letter to Paynie or his wife from Sister, which J. M. read to me tonight just before supper. She said she was sending Christmas presents to all of us under separate cover, and asked Paynie to bring them from his home in Natchitoches to Melrose, and that although she had ordered copies of Brandford's last book for each of us, some delay in making delivery would necessitate that they be sent a little later. So there we are confronted by the spectacle of a bog so mad at us that she refuses to set her foot in the place where we shall all be having Christmas dinner together, and yet at the same time, in spite of her fury, insists on sending us all Christmas presents. I mean you don't have to be, but it helps out a lot if you are.....crazy. If you are, I am, too.

What with one thing and another, I haven't turned on my radio in the last 48 hours, and so am woefully behind in what goes on in the world. But I'm not very sleepy tonight, and I reckon I'll get caught up shortly, possibly tonight. Rudolph did something which puzzled me a little. He wrote J. M. on some matter or other, and remarked he would be passing this way during the holidays "as Francois had invited me". I am under the impression I have been trying to stave him off until after all the Henrys have departed, and until Melrose and I, myself, are patched up a little, but I must have failed in putting over my point. Well, his presence here during the current week will cramp my style considerably, for both in entertaining the white folks in the big house and colored folks at Yucca, I don't need an extra house guest to keep me from getting lonely, but I'll manage alright, anyway it works out.....

Helen Baldwin
12/14

3343

Monday, December 20th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Poor you.....

Just after folding up my beard last night, I nearly fell slap out of bed when a San Antonio news flash announced that 19 or 20 inches of snow had cascaded down on the metropolitan area during Sunday.

I can just about picture what New York has been like today and what difficulties you have had to encounter. Tonight's Lux Radio program, - "Miracle on 34th Street" is timely enough, but under the mountains of snow, today's miracle must have been in the form of any customer who succeeded in reaching the store.

We had a good frost here last night, but the sky was clear-clear, and today was all blue and gold. It would be so nice to be able to share some of it with you, although too quick a thaw at the moment might not be so much to be desired either, I suppose, what with all the floods that might short circuit the subways and Heaven knows what all.

But one nice thing about being thoroughly aroused by news effecting you, I found it an excellent excuse to do a little reading, and so, at long last, after after several fitful starts, I actually did a few pages from J. Gunther's "Inside U. S. A." It is the kind of book I like, not quite so striking in its human touch as Ernie Pyle, but very readable and probably a little more profound. Somehow I gain the impression that Mr. Gunther gives a fair appraisal of his subject matter, without any apparent attempt to heap up to vast laudations or condemnations of American virtues and vices. Sometime I must read his "Inside Europe" for I should feel I was learning much if his same nicety of balance obtains in that volume, too.

Today's mail should be the expected seasonal bulge, - mostly on the greeting card side, with a few envelopes addressed to the Madam. There seems to be the usual few cards without signature, and one hopes that these bear some small town name where one would be likely to expect no mail from anyone other than the single person known in the region, - such as little Miss Dormon with a Saline, Louisiana cancellation.

One rather large envelope contained a clipping that reviewed Lyle's "Joe Gilmore", with the envelope bearing no return address. It was cancelled from Plaquemine, Louisiana, which suggests it

3344

might be from "Cousin" Minerva Desabrey, a direct descendant of Joseph Erwin who lives down Flaquimine way. She has been here once or twice and is quite interesting. The Madam always giggled when she heard she was threatening to pass this way, saying: "Ah, yes, that bag from the branch of the family which is supposed to have been touched by the tar brush".

But the majority of the mail sits here on my desk unopened, and there is nothing in it, so near as I can make out, that is at all pressing. My secretary went to Alexandria today to buy some new clothes for his approaching wedding which takes place sometime after Christmas, perhaps the following day. Little King is also marrying this week, both youths being 18 or 19 I guess. Little King is marrying, of all things, a mulatto descendant of the Conde family of early Natchitoches lineage. I believe she has been married before, - legally, I believe, but what effect, if any, that will have on the impending nuptials, I know not. To have known these children at the age of ten and to seem them now barging into matrimony inclines me to stroke my long gray beard and ponder on how time flies and children leap into maturity in such a twinkling.

This evening I received a request from a youth who asked me if I could write a pretty Christmas letter on his behalf to his girl friend in the State Prison at Angola, where she is spending a couple of years for having stabbed a local youth to death last year at Christmas time. My caller was not good at dictation and so I did what I could by way of a pretty epistle to the lady jail bird. If I had only thought in time, I might have put in a carbon, and so have a duplicate to examine later just to see how I looked in the role of troubadour serenading a murderess behind the bars. I attached a little note to the letter, pointing out to the Warden that in reality the composition is mine and was sent without the suitor being able to read the same after I had completed it, and asking said official to kindly overlook any phrases that I, through lack of experience, may have included in excess of the usual form, - if any, - which one should be guided by in writing love letters to ladies of the type his prisoner represents. A couple of aspects in the case of the swain for whom I penned the letter is the fact, - unimportant, however, that he is a groom of but some six months and appears to be living happily with his bride. Another point is the fact that his real name is Cyrus Young, but he asked me to sign the letter for him the way he himself prefers to spell it: - Sigh Young. And if that ain't a sight, I give up.

It just occurs to me that what with the weather contions in your area and the seasonal lag of the mail this week, this note will not reach your true hand until hafter Christmas. I'm sorry I didn't specifically express my best wishes for the 25th in my last letter, but even though I neglected to set them down in so many words, I have a feeling you had no difficulty in picking up my telepathy wave length....

3345

Tuesday, December 21st, 1948.

Memorandum:

For no particular reason, I seem to be getting around to my little evening chat with you a little later than usual. But without glancing at my timepiece, I may tell myself that since the sun went down earlier tonight than any other day in the year, it only seems farther into the night that I lay hands on my Underwood.

Too warm for a jacket today, with a bright sun and a warm breeze from the south, the one place in the world on which my thoughts seemed to center all day was your metropolitan area. For your sake in particular, I am hoping some of those 18 or 20 thousand snow shovlers have eliminated much of the snow from the Concourse, 59th and 57th Street and the Grand Central area generally.

The mail continues heavy, and in the Parcel Post section came a package of what I take to be pear trees, which was wholly unexpected. The sending agent is some nursery in Texas I never heard of. I take it the shipment must be on Mr. Bachelier's orders, although that is merely a guess. It seems to me in his last letter, - forwarded to you a week or so ago, that he mentioned some pears of particular virtue, but somehow, either through imperfect reading or imperfect understanding of the letter, - assumed at the time that they were to come from his little river farm, being something which he had raised and wanted to share with me. Be that as it may, the pears came today, - pour of them, and fine specimens they seem to be, and about 6 feet in height. Tonight they are getting a special drink in oozing moss and sand, and along about sun up on the morrow, I shall plant them

in Unit "C. 1, in a line paralleling the North-South drive between the old raggedy house and the Alphonse gate. Eventually, it seems to me, we ought to have about enough pear trees at Arenbourg, and it is only a detail that although I like pears well enough, I never seem to eat them. But good old Vera loves persimmons and perhaps by working on her a little, - and on myself at the same time, some taste for pears may be developed.

The weather being what it is, I spent quite a bit of time out of doors, both at Arenbourg and Melrose today, and

3346

found time between jumps to see a few people, - friends passing this way in the white buckets and colored folks from the Little River area. From one of the latter, I heard something rather amusing, - in fact the telling of the thing was fully as hilarious as the point of the tale, and a good laugh in the midst of a busy day is certainly bracing. One gay young blade spoke of having gone to Montgomery, Ala. - across Red River from Melrose, last Saturday evening by way of courting a young negress living there with her parent, the latter not being home when the youth arrived. Although he touched on the point very lightly, I was given to understand that these two young philadners had a very intimate and satisfying contact, and the gay blade, on getting ready to leave his girl friend, told her he would like to give her something in appreciation. But the girl declared that she herself had had a lovely time and that she needed nothing but that if he, lover really insisted on making some sort of a gift, he might purchase something for her mother, - something special, - for "cause Mama sure is a-wantin' a new corset mighty bad".

I reckon everyone in the South has heard of physicians accepting eggs, poultry, vegetables and the like in lieu of cash in payment for professional calls. But this is the first I ever heard of an unconventional daughter declining financial reward for herself by unselfishly suggesting that her partner in dalliance, by way of payment, toss mama a new pair of stays.

On the home front, I am thinking up ways to interrupt Pat in his studies from time to time, and having a measure of success. He brought home a stack of law books to study during vacation. Youths are always doing that, but usually never cracking the text books during most of the interim. But ever since his arrival, Pat has been getting up early each morning, and remaining indoors all day, cloistered in an upper chamber, digging into his tomes madly and without let up save for dinner and supper. Such "stick-to-it-ive-ness" is so rare and so laudable that I cannot help admiring it while frowning on the lack of balance as between books and blyish diversions, and so I invade his scantum one in a while on some pretext or other, with a view to distracting him a little. He is nice about "helping" me, and while I may not be contributing anything to pedagogy, I hope the mental relaxation he gets at such times may lift the curtain of legal concentration momentarily at least.

I slept indifferently in the early part of last night, but for an hour and a half after midnight, discovered a station, - Denver, I think, which gave an hour and a half of strass and lehar comp sitions, which ended up by rocking me to sleep but completely and complete satisfaction. may you be as lucky...

Bachelor 17th 334
Va. & Francis Dixon
(Xmas card)

Wednesday, December 22nd, 1948.

Memorandum:

Cloudy and humid and warm this morning, making a perfect time for getting the fine pears properly placed at Arenbourg.

Little King and Cy passed by just as I was starting to dig the holes, and they both fell to and the whole business was accomplished and in good order almost before I had expected to have the thing well begun. And so I found myself back at Yucca well before breakfast and able to hit off quite a few licks on this machine before mail time.

Of the two enclosures, you will note Mr. Bachelier refers to a Chinese chestnut for Arenbourg, and I am trying to recall what a Chinese chestnut is, but I assume it is probably like the horse chestnuts such as border the Champs Elysees, and if so, that should be ever so pretty in a Cane River setting don't you think.

The note from Virginia Putler was an unexpected plaiser. I dropped her a little note last week, as is my custom at Christmas time, and mentioned the Sugdam sketches in Lyle's book, because I remembered Francis' interest in them. It has been so long since I have heard from Virginia, however, that this note came as a surprise. You may recall that before I knew her very well, - and while still in New York, I was puzzled at her silence. Later I grew to understand that every once in a while she goes into an eclipse over an extended period, and from the enclosed evidence, I take it she must be moving out from one of these. Her references, of course, are to Alice Walworth Graham and to Moane, both of whom, I take it, are "personae non grata" at the moment. Well, so be it, but what a pity that unquestionably the best brain in Mississippi, next to her father's, and what is said to be one of the most beautiful women in the South should be so unsuccessful in whatever attempts she makes at happiness.

Somewhere above, I mentioned having seen Little King this morning. He told me his wedding plans are a little hazy, as the girl he hoped to marry on Christmas hadn't secured her divorce as yet. By chance, J. H. had mentioned the matter at supper

3348

last night. His cousin, Arthur Watson, the Natchitoches lawyer, is handling the case, and with Characteristic touch, J. H. spoke rather lightly to Cousin Arthur about the matter during the day.

"Listen, cousin," he wined in mock seriousness, "that poor boy and girl have been patient with you long enough. Don't keep them waiting any longer for the girl to get her divorce. You've probably already got the money for the whole transaction anyway, and well in advance. Just go ahead now and give the girl a receipt so she can get married on Saturday, and you can always settle the legal aspects of the divorce at any old time."

No wonder the Madam was forever saying: "I declare, J. H. is a sight!"

My secretary didn't arrive until after 7 o'clock tonight. He said he had been busy all day, fixing up his house, making preparations for the bride he is to bring there a day or two after Christmas. He told me he had fixed himself up a fine Christmas tree, too, and seemed more pleased with that feature than his carpentering, - a feature which I liked mightily.

I'm wondering what these two impending weddings will be like, coming as they do, just after Christmas when much of the good cheer, & fear, will have been exhausted. Mr. Brew's uncle, Sugabour, tapped on my door this morning, saying he didn't like wine, but would have just a little nip for him, as he was low-low in spirits. Wakes and weddings are two events that usually call for quite heavy flowing of the bottle and jug, but if supplies are running low already, it would almost seem as though the other good old standby, - coffee, is likely to be the order of the day. But one nice thing about such festive affairs, the negroes always seem able to have a heap of fun on nothing at all, and so I have no doubt, wet or dry, the business to hand will be accomplished to everyone's satisfaction.

I expected the bands this afternoon, and my barber threatened to pass this way, too, but neither of the professions the bands and Beau Mack represent showed up, but there were enough others to take their places.

Three children from St. Mathew's school must have blessed me today, for instead of being turned loose from their classes at the usual hour, they were permitted to leave an hour earlier in order to bring me an invitation to a party at school tomorrow night. As the children of the delegation have to pass by - elrose on their way home anyway, - and frequently do stop in to say howdy, they seemed to be mighty tickled that the teacher had let them out early to transact their business. We talked about Santa was going to bring each of them on Christmas Eve, - and one said he was going to get a bicycle, the other a pair of shoes and the third a sow, -- poor s

0288

Roane & Ferriday Baynes
3349

Thursday, December 23rd, 1948.

Memorandum: I will write you a letter of a few lines, but I am sure it will be insufficient to tell of the sheer joy at Arenbourg today when I visited the "children" and talked endlessly with my old friend, the mocking bird, who was assisting me in spading around the mimosas and fruit trees, planning, the while, how we would celebrate Arenbourg's birthday by further plantings. Christmas, although still a day away, is unquestionably assured both at Yucca and at Arenbourg, and in recounting Arenbourg's pleasures today, I shall but anticipate Yucca's tomorrow night when that fat, neat package I have so nobly abstained from opening, gives way to my prying fingers. Tonight Arenbourg says thanks, thanks for the joy we have in building together, and tomorrow night Yucca will likewise say thanks.

It is so good to know that this year's snow didn't seem quite so bad as last year's. I am glad for your sake, but shall be happier when I know it has all disappeared, for I am sure it will make getting about ever so much easier, and not only in traveling on thoroughfares where you are bound to go, but also in such stretches as 59th Street where volition impells you sometimes on your way to "adison Avenue. I think of you so often during the morning hours when an excellent weather report in this area gives me a complete picture of the country and large and unfailingly indicates what the day is like at dawning over Manhattan.

And I am glad you like the canvas. The point you make about having it combine both the spirit of its mistress, having been painted during her life time, plus the fact that it is a good example of a "ouisiana Kinsey, covers a dual consideration which lots of pictures may possess, although seldom do we chance to sense all they do embrace.

I am particularly glad to learn that packages can readily be received through 908. Up until you mentioned it, I was under the impression that perhaps nothing but 1st class mail might be available through this medium. It occurred to me, too, that the wayward pecans might be accounted for though the comparative smallness of the pigeon hole bearing that magical number. But apparently they must have been lost along the way, either having become side-tracked before then entered the local post office, or merely frittered away in transit. Curiously enough several letters have come to hand, indicating the some people who were

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supposedly sent one sack ended up by receiving at least two, and some who were thought to have been sent some failed to receive any at all. Possibly I have been wrong in assuming that the fault might be placed at the door of the common carrier whereas, what with all the excitement going on here when the pecan harvest was at flood tide, may well account for the mix-up. Only I am sorry that you failed to get yours while some people like little Miss Alberta, Rudolph and others, got a double dip.

I appreciate your kindness in giving me some account of the contents of the Saxon volume's contents. I hope the account of the collection of mulatto paintings gracing my boudoir and living room doesn't excite Miss Maude or Tulane University to start angling for them. My guess is that even though they should, they wouldn't get to first base, but at the moment there is enough going on without having to push Lyle's aunt and the University into Cape River.

And while on the subject of the paintings, did I mention before that pasted on the back of the "Father and Son" picture, and heavily coated in a thick layer of glue, is a slip of paper I read in the "Adam's own hand reading:

"I want Francois to have this picture as his own, just as Lyle did. Cammie W. Henry, June 30th, 1946."

Lyle once hoped Rosenwald would assist him in establishing a museum by endowing the Jean Baptiste Metoyer house across the River from "elrose. But that of course never materialized, and now, as you know, the old mansion is no more.

It is true that before his death, Lyle did take many of his things here at "elrose to "ew Orleans, but practically everything at Yucca remained. The last time the "Adam was at Yucca was in July when Lyle had delirium tremens. Following that visit, Lyle returned here two or three times during that same autumn, and somehow the "Adam got the idea that during those visits, Lyle had removed all his possessions, including his books. People like to "ssae Mae used to be somewhat startled, after spending an evening with me in the Yucca living room, to hear the "Adam on the following morning declare that there weren't any more of Lyle's books here.

So far as Lyle stating that he intended giving his collection of pictures to a museum, I doubt very much if that is in his original manuscript, but rather is something that smart Messrs Dryer and Tallant cooked up for subsequent angeling. As for the "Charles Lebrun item, that was never up here, and following Lyle's death it was moved from his St. Charles suite to little Miss Alberta's studio, and I believe was sold along with some other paintings last Spring.

And thanks, too, for giving me a picture of your holiday set up. I am so glad you are going to have the last week of December to yourself and may it be ever so happy. But I must stop, but just let me say how happy are Arenbourg and myself tonight, thanks to you...

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Friday, December 24th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Here is the setting:

On the end talbe before the window giving on the white garden burn two white Christmas tree shaped candles. From my desk lamp is suspended from bring red h ribbons the deliciously frosted pine cones. On each side of my typewriter are boxes of candy, the hard ones that last long, and the chocolate mints that dissolve faster as between puffs. I lift the Kool cigarette burning on my ash tray. Gay candy canes and cornucopias gleam from the white papers before me, and although outside it is a "sloppy "hristmas "ve", misty and rather cool, my feet are snugly encased in my jolis "antouffles, and I'm as happy as a clam, thanks to you.

Just beyond where I see lights blinking through the bamboo hedge functions the Melrose Social Club, dark with "hophians and wine, and beyond sleeps Arenbourg, as happy and grateful as I, what with having celebrated its birthday yesterday.

What a happy Christmas Even, and so much joy coming to me through yesterday's post and tonight's opening of my Christmas package.

The past 24 hours have been so busy that I am delighted at this opportunity to relax alone in conversation with you and to tell you how happy your gifts and thoughtfulness are making me. It is good to be alone.

Last night I was quite tired, and after my little chat with you, I had a hot bath and folded up. It was comparatively early, perhaps 9:30. I suppose I fell asleep immediately. I never did look at the clock again, but sometime of other a tapping came on my door. I roused myself up, and donning a red handkerchief & dressing gown, responded to the tap. It was, of all people, James Cunningham. He said he was on his way from "ew Orleans to Denton. We sat and chatted for a while, when Lo! another tapping at my chamber door, and it was none other than Dr. Eleanor and Don and Dr. and Mrs. Agriella, my dentist. Still in my dressing gown I ushered them in. They had brought me a fine bottle of wine which we opened and a bottle of whiskey, which the worsleys had brought in mid November. All these unexpected visitors were a surprise and we had ever so pleasant a sitting, and when it was time for them to leave,

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I accompanied them across the gardens with my flash light, the night being dark, - and as pilot of the party, I might well have startled the cats and dogs, what with me still clad in my bright red dressing gown and a pair of ancient and dilapidated slippers, which Lyle had worn out years ago. If I had been wearing my elegant new ones, I should most certainly have dressed, what with shoes to save the new slippers, but my Christmas package was still sitting in my armoire awaiting tonight, - and I am glad it was so, for now I can revel in them all by myself.

It was so late when the two doctors and their better or lesser halves had departed that James decided to remain all night, and I suppose it was probably nearer one than twelve when we finally folded up. Naturally, unaccustomed to so much nocturnal entertainment, I couldn't go to sleep, but I was happy and my radio was doing Handel's Oratorio, the Messiah, and I was glad to be awake.

I noticed the General's Cadillac parked at the side gate when I handed my guests to their car, but as the big house was silent and dark, it was obvious everyone was at rest.

The General is just as nice as ever and he and his wife were kind enough to say they thought the house looked alright, and they seemed to like the simplification of things and the fairly ample presence of narcissus and roses that had found their way from the madam's bulb garden to her room, the upstairs living room and the bed rooms. No attempt had been made to introduce greenery, but the simple spring flowers and roses seemed to give sufficient touch of beauty and a nostalgia to hit a happy harmony between simplicity and satisfaction.

Tonight I am rather sleepy, but pleasantly so, and I may get caught up on rest before dawn. There were quite a few visitors today, both from the ranks of the gentry and my colored friends. One of my little friends confided to me during the afternoon that Santa Claus was going to bring him so ice cream. I think this is the first time I ever heard of a child wanting Santata to bring him ice cream, and come to think of it the jolly old fellow with the long white whiskers is going to have an odd assortment in his bag as he rides the sky ways tonight, what with the other items I have heard mentioned that he was likely to bring other little friends, - a bicycle, shoes, a saw and ice cream. The contents of his sack, like Politics, certainly makes for strange bed fellows.

I so sincerely hope your Christmas eve has been pleasant. I am perfectly delight with mine, and I feel thirty million times blessed, what with Arenbourg happy off yonder in the darkness, and all the evidences of your thoughtfulness and generosity so abundantly scatter before me. My heart says thank you and I know you realize exactly how happy I am tonight, thanks to you....

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Christmas Night, 1948.

Memorandum:

A good rain last night, followed by a chilly sun today, produced at once a sloppy Christmas and a brilliant one, so everybody must have been happy locally.

My weather man says it is cold-cold tonight in Manhattan. It is comparatively cold here, - around 30, but my feet are cosily encased in Mr. Sak's Fifth Avenue finest slippers, and so the rigors of Winter has no effect on me.

Kara, on examining the slippers this afternoon, expressed the greatest admiration for them, and observed that he had never seen anything quite so special, with a whole sheep obviously having been used to make the lining of each pantoufle.

Frankly, it has been the pleasantest Christmas I can remember at Melrose. I have no doubt that this hinges primarily on the fact that Sister did not put in an appearance. Thus with the inevitable disturbing influence being absent, everything rocked along as smooth as silk, and no one had to gasp in anticipation of what might be the nature of the brick bat that was about to fly, - since the heaver of brick bats wasn't present.

Celeste kept open house on her side of the fence for morning and afternoon dispensing of holiday spirit and good cheer. I passed by for ten minutes in the morning, but merely to say Howdy and to wish everyone a Merry Christmas. Following my custom of a decade past, I received at Yucca, with white folks not invited but a red carpet out for the negroes. And many of them passed this way.

There was no Christmas tree at Celeste's this year, and it had been agreed in advance that no gifts would be exchanged. So far as I know, this agreement was pretty generally observed, although the General spilled over a little by bringing me some Crestablance port while Frances Henry, Celeste and Madam Regard sent candy while Joe and his wife did much in the shaving soap and sock department in my favor.

Somehow the interim between November 17th and December 25th was sufficient to give everyone a more perfectly balanced sense of proportion regarding the madam, so that we could talk of her in gaiety and laughter, of her own marvelous sense of humor and examples of it, without having our emotions tinged with sadness, for after the eclipse

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of happiness in thinking of her a month back, so close to her funeral, we could now think of her as living again, and suppers and dinners in the big house were fully as gay as they would have been, had she graced the head of the table.

Sister telephoned about 3 o'clock this afternoon, calling for J. H., who was in town. J. H. Celeste answered the 'phone. But Sister declined to talk with anyone but J. H., which, of course, was a slap at Celeste in particular, and the others in general, but that was alright, too, for it merely tended to confirm what everyone, ready to let Christmas sweep away by-gones, might well have inclined to forgive and forget. For one so clever and falsification, Sister is certainly remarkably gifted in being, - at long last, - so adept in taking a swing at others and succeeding only in giving herself a black eye.

Both Aurellia and Mr. Brew, it goes without saying, were surprised and delighted with the unexpected gifts they recieved from afar. They were so entranced with the beauty of the wrappings that both of them preferred to leave the gifts unopened, and were proud as peacocks to march home, flaunting the gayly decorated "colis" so all their friends along their respective routes might note and admire. On the morrow we shall hear particulars about the contents of Aurellia's packages, the dress material and so on.

Aurellia, for her part, presented me with a pair of pure "D" nigger "Sunday" socks, dark blue with a vast and astonishing assortment of colors in the stripes. And for my exclusive use, she presented me with a white cup and saucer with a single rose on each, just as remarkable in its good taste in color and design as the socks were extraordinary. But among those who passed by during the day, the one who floored me most completely was a little 8 year old friend, who presented me with a dead mocking bird. He explained he had had some trouble in catching it, but thought it would make such nice gravy if I wanted it for supper with rice. Shades of Santa Clause and James O. Audubon.....

But it is getting late and I am about to turn out my desk lamp, light my white candles, pour me a glass of port and nibble on a piece of fruit cake, letting my thoughts wander over the associations of the past, and praising God for all the happiness channeled to me from Lydia.....

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Sunday, December 26th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Perhaps it is due to my imagination, perhaps to coincidence, but however it is, I seem to find fully as much pleasure in the day after Christmas as I do in Christmas day itself.

Last year it was the snowy geese riding at anchor on the pale blue surface of Little River and the gumbo at Dee-dee's. This year, without a moon of any kind, it was a simple mixture of pleasant personalities in-doors that somehow combined to evolve the ultimate in satisfaction. And in both cases, I suspect, there is that delicious aroma of sweet things, radiating from the heart on the previous day that gives unique distinction to all the sensations following in its train.

First off this morning, Aurellia arrived, bubbling over with delight over your two gifts. After leaving the big house yesterday around 2 in the afternoon, she had started for home with her unopened packages when, along her route, she was told that her papa and her brother had passed out at a negro cabin further along the road. She accordingly hunted them up, and after that had to find someone to pour them into a car and take them to her house, although they live in a place by themselves. I take it the afternoon from there on out until dark was rather tempestuous, but when night settled down, everything was in order again with Aurellia, her mama, Bessie and the baby, and after they had supped on gumbo, Aurellia opened her presents, - each of which I had to hear about in great detail. She was enchanted with the elegant wrapping of the box containing the "head wrap" as she described it, and gave me an extended description of its colors, how she is fixing to wear it and with what, and so on and so forth. She was equally enthralled by the dress material you sent, and said "they's both so pretty-pretty" she had to hurry home this evening to start making up the one item so as to be able to wear it with the other. It required no imagination at all on my part to see a new star gleaming in your crown as I contemplated all the fulsome pleasure your generosity had brought forth in this simple heart.

Juanita, - Joe Henry's wife, came over for a sitting before Aurellia was half finished, and so I reckon I shall hear additional details on the morrow. Juanita had brought a thesis on which she has been working for a university degree, with a view of running over its salient points with me. We had a couple of hours of concentrated effort and an hour of dictation. I enjoyed listening to her dissertation on contemporary education and she seemed to find

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some points she could use in some of the ideas her main points suggested to us both during and after the reading.

She and her husband returned to Beaumont right after dinner.

The Dark Duke followed fast on the heels of the departing Henrys, and he and I got caught up on a lot of local doings which would be likely to come to my attention only from such a source. He has a good sense of humor, laughs easily and tells a story rather well. The swift change from the earlier intellectual efforts of the morning was refreshing. He told me a story, - not precisely of the parlor type, which, I suppose, was greatly enhanced in value because of his inimitable use of the English language, his facile smile and gorgeous inflections. But even without that, the tale was amusing, I think.

It seems a negro was arrested and brought before a judge on the charge of assault. The judge asked the prisoner about it and the negro readily admitted he had struck an associate because the latter had called him a bad name. The judge demanded to know precisely what the man had called him, but the negro, surveying the crowded court room demurred. But the judge insisted and the negro declared, somewhat "shame-faced", that the man had called him "a black son of a bitch". The judge received this information mildly, and pointed out that was scarcely sufficient grounds for him to have struck the man. The negro's reaction was one of amazement and he asked the judge if he himself wouldn't have resented such a remark. The judge side-stepped the question by saying that even though the man might have done so, it would obviously not have been a true statement, since the judge wasn't black. Whereupon the negro, a little puzzled, demanded:

"But even if you ain't black, what would you 've done if he d a-called you the kind of a son of a bitch you is."

Alright.....

In the afternoon came the Worsleys, which is always a pleasure. Their chief news from the Crescent City was to the effect that Pual Weidt has sold his house with a view to moving to -- of all places -- Natchitoches. But with houses as scarce there as in New Orleans, plus other considerations, they believe Mr. Weidt will end up by not coming up this way, - I hope. Dr. Eleanor chided her husband gently for having gone in pretty heavily on the social side since the moved into their fine mansion on Front Street. Her days are very busy and she says her greatest satisfaction in the day comes when she can flatten out in her bed, brace a book on the table you sent last Christmas, and just relax. They left here early so that she could pay social calls on hers and other patients in the hospital. As for me, I'm going to relax shortly, adjust mes jolis pantoufles and read a page or two by the light of my white candles. I so much hope yours was a happy day after.....

Miss Nellie M. 17/8

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Monday, December 27th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Ho - hum, - too many pilgrims.....

It was chilly and damp all day, with an overcast sky, but tonight it seems to be warming up a little and by tomorrow morning it will probably be raining, which will harm the Arenbourg children not at all.

A letter from Shreveport today gave me some inkling as to what is going on up there, but as I was asked to destroy it on reading, I did so at once, of course. From fairly first rate sources, I learn that Sister is traveling about day and night, sometimes with her husband, frequently at night without him, calling on all and sundry, and making vast complaints about the way things have been done at "elrose since her Mother's death, and how this or that should have been sent here or there and wasn't, and so on and so forth. Her denunciation of Clif Byrd seems to be based primarily on the fact that he was kind enough to offer Robina a ride back to Shreveport with him in his car following the funeral. I reckon most of the complaints are about on as well founded a base.

I also learn that in its social column a week ago Sunday, mention was made of the fact that Miss Denholme figures in the new Saxon book. Robina says she hasn't read it, - the book, as yet, but in skipping through it, was impressed by the considerable reference to drinks, - rather out of proportion to good taste, she thought. Miss Robina is not a prohibitionist, and enjoys her cocktails as well as anyone else, and so I take it her opinion of the fact that stuff is spilled pretty generously throughout the pages of J. Gilmore's Friends must indicate an amplitude of fire water in the piece.

Mr. Brew came to see me this noon, proud as a peacock with his Christmas gift which he brought along to show me, still neatly wrapped in your Christmas box. He says they are the finest handkerchiefs made, and I am ready to take him at his word, for they did look elegant. But the most important thing is that you made him ever so happy by your thoughtfulness, and when I think of how many you did the same thing for, I am consumed with admiration.

I seem to be having hard luck in getting a new Reading

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Machine. A fine new one was left at the store for me today, and you can picture my disappointment when I discovered, on unpacking the thing, that the revolving table starts automatically when the current is turned on, which make it impossible to use, of course, since it is necessary, even as in radio, to let the tubes warm up a bit before the revolving table is set to whirling. I am so glad I still have my old machine which staggers along fairly well, in spite of its obvious decrepitude, and I am steadily holding the thought that it will continue to rock along until a perfect new one arrives to replace it. I try to read a little each night before folding up, - a page or two from my Bible and as much from the Gunther book which is really a store house of information which interests me very much in clarifying my concepts of various States in their economic, political and social aspects. Some of the portraits of contemporary politicians is interesting, too, - Governor Warren, Gelm Taylor, and several Senators who continue in public affairs.

After a restful interim from too many pilgrims, the business seems to have started up again. Urbana, Illinois, - where ever that may be, Mobile, Alabama, Phoenix, Arizona and some place in Montana were represented today, and some of them appeared when I was trying to entertain a few old friends from Natchitoches, and to handle 6 or 8 interruptions from the colored section, - friends from Little and Red River areas who had failed to get up this way on Christmas Day. Between now and the 1st of the year, I suppose there will be flocks of people from thither and yon, passing this way from where ever they have been to where ever they are going. I am certainly glad James Cunningham didn't bring "Adolph" this way Sunday afternoon or night, on James' return to New Orleans, as he had threatened to do, - without any encouragement at all on my part. Momentarily there is enough going on without having any house guests, and especially those who like to tinker with reading machines, the like of which they have never seen before.

From the enclosure, you will have the pleasure of seeing what Miss Nellie is up to. You may recall that Frances Brandon is Eli's sister, - the friend of J. Pipes, of Norman, Oklahoma. In this letter, I seem to sense what I have always felt when conversing with Miss Nellie, - to wit, that she somehow felt the Brandons were rather more important than the Wailles family. But I never could understand why, for while the Brandons are fine, produced the first Mississippi born Governor of that state and so on, the Wailles family produced J. C. and his father, old Mr. Levin, who were certainly far greater in many respects than any of the Brandons, and while the contemporary Brandons are ever so nice, Miss Nellie, in my opinion, has to take a back seat for nobody, for she is just grand.

Today's incoming mail was enormous, and although I ripped through oceans of it, - and must acknowledge much tonight, there is still a basket full untouched. But all this will keep me busy and lux "radio and the balance of the air artistry will have to take care of itself. Now for my jolis pantoufles, and work.....

Carolyn D.
Xmas 1948
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Thursday, December 28th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Yesterday the number of individual pilgrim groups passing this way was twelve. Today there were none. I wish some technologist would contrive a system that would spread such visitations more evenly.

But on second thought, perhaps the present hit or miss type of procedure is just as well, for I was as busy as a chicken on a hot griddle today, - and without pilgrims, so it is as well that I had the whole batch yesterday.

The mails continue heavy and I have about reached the point where the identity of the writers almost escapes me, what with the speed I am forced to run through the succeeding assortments, slowing down to genuine enjoyment only when a note or letter from some particular source comes to hand.

Mr. Brew remains fairly steadfast, I guess, - probably more so than the average youth of his station, still in his teens and his wedding day less than a week off. I'm certainly glad Cane River negroes don't go in for honeymoons, for that would set me back a peg or two in my contacts with the outside world.

I talked with the State agency in Baton Rouge this morning regarding the whys and wherefores of my new Reading Machine, but as the head of the bureau was absent, I found myself hooked up to someone who obviously knew just as much about the mechanics of the business as I did, recalling the time, after considerable difficulty, I once got little Miss Alberta connected with a telephone contact to determine where she would meet her Shreveport friend to head out for Cape God, - either in Shreveport or New Orleans, and when the conversation was ended and Miss A. had hung up, expressing great satisfaction over the interview, she looked dumbly at me when I inquired as to which city had been selected for the meeting, confessing somewhat shame-facedly, that that was the one thing she had forgotten to settle.

And so tonight I have my new machine rigged up and all set for a bit of reading. But either there is or isn't any automatic starter or stopped, - and the bureau couldn't tell me if there was supposed to be one or the other, - and so it is that when the button is turned to contact the electric current, the revolving disk starts turning automatically. The record, naturally, must be put on the disk before the current is turned on, and in order to turn the record over, the whole machine must be disconnected from its electric contact. I can't believe this cockeyed arrangement has either the blessing or approval of the Library of Congress, - and

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it is certainly mighty inconvenient, - but once the record itself starts playing, everything about it, speed, tone, distinctness, etc., are splendid. But I'm bound to write a letter to somebody or other tonight to find out in what kind of a "Pays des merveilles" I now find myself.

I got around to read a letter from little Miss Dornon, as of December 22nd, I believe, - today. If I run across it, I shall enclose it herewith. You will get a kick out of her admonition to me regarding the identity of the persons, - if any, - with whom I am to share a piece of the candy she sent me. What with the wealth and potential candy supplies to which both Van and Celeste have access, it would seem a pity that I couldn't share just a little piece with say, Clemence or Aurellia's mama or Mr. Brew or whoever. Miss Dornon is slightly wacky, and it will afford me the greatest pleasure to tell her as much when I get around to acknowledge her letter.

A letter from Rudolph today, which I inadvertently destroyed, spoke of his great satisfaction in the work he had accomplished during his current holiday recesses from school, - with much carpentry seeming to be the main object of his efforts, - doing over his garage, I believe, or making an apartment, possibly, or perhaps merely building in cupboards and whatnot. To tell you the truth, I was so busy with half a dozen other things when reading the letter that I am a little vague about the details. But I am sure he was happy, which is the main thing, and, as I recall, he was looking forward to seeing James Cunningham the same day, for, as he explained, James had come to Denton from New Orleans to spend Christmas, - a bit of information that wasn't precisely news.

It seems to me Rudolph said, too, that he had been reading the Joe Gilmore opus and found it easy to recognize the parts Lyle wrote, - the chapters revolving about Melrose, the Mada, Miss Robina and little Miss Alberta. It is undoubtedly true that Lyle never wrote a line of the sections devoted to doings in New Orleans, and I imagine these may be charged off to Eddie Dryer's handiwork, in his effort to get enough material to make a book. I am curious to know something about the biographical sketch, and if it has Lyle born in the Cascade Mountains of the great North West, - or in Baton Rouge. You know Lyle always declared in strictest confidence to the Madam that he was born in the State of Washington while his Aunt Maude swears he was born on a plantation near Baton Rouge. Personally, I don't see as it makes the slightest difference where he was born, but I should like to know how Mr. Dryer handled the matter.

I wish you could see the snowy pine cones, suspended by their gay red ribbons from my reading lamp here beside me on my desk. They are a constant source of joy to me as I hammer away at this typewriter, and they are terribly important since they are not only lovely in themselves but more so because they keep me constantly in mind of someone lovelier....

RD 3361
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Wednesday, December 29th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Clear and cool, with a million stars studding the heavens.

I haven't the faintest notion what time it might be, but I imagine around 9:30. I had a busy day, and after supper, I sat down for a few moments to "rest my eyes", and after nodding a bit, I awakened to discover every cack in the house had stopped, and I was too interested in doing other things to turn on the radio.

I saw Celeste at 9 this morning, and somewhat coyly she invited me to a party at her house tonight, - "just for the neighbors."

I had some guests this afternoon, and she brought some of hers to visit me, and on departing, reminded me again of her impending "just for the neighbors" party.

A year or two ago I got hooked on one of those guests being made up primarily of discontented widows from Magnolia and a collection of dull clerics from the local Catholic Church. If I remember correctly, I remained just fifteen minutes on that occasions when I lied to my hostess and withdrew and never did go back. Tonight I'm not going to lie, in fact I'm not even going to the party. Food at Celeste's is always as excellent as the conversation is insipid, and while I wouldn't mind having a good go at the egg-nog with whatever the collation may consist of, still I can well do without the conversation, and besides I have a book I want to read some candy I want to eat, a Rocquefort sandwich I want to work on and a cup of Tender Leaf Tea, - no less, I want to swallow. Under the circumstances, I can't think of a possible reason why I should be venturing across the fence to get bogged down in a mess of widows, prelates and egg-nog.

This morning I asked Napoleon Bonaparte Carter, who is an excellent mechanic, to come look at my new reading machine, hoping against hope he might find out some way to make the automatic starter and stopper function. He tried nobly, but failed. Then Teddy Baranowski took a gander at the thing, but to no avail.

Ezra had overheard someone say I had a problem, and so he passed this way just before noon. He explained he knew nothing about such business and doubted if he could do anything. But he was wrong, for at one glance he discovered precisely what twist

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was needed to make the thing operate to perfection. Naturally I was enchanted, and am anxious to put the thing through its paces before folding up my beard tonight.

When Aurellia passed this way this morning, she asked me if I would do something for her. She had brought the elegant box containing our Christmas gift to her, for she wanted me to see the elegant contents of the same, and her request was that I write to that lady what done sent me this shawl which is so pretty-pretty, and just tell her how I like it and say thanks from Aurellia. So there you are, and if you are half as happy with the results of your selection and the happiness it has brought Aurellia, then the world is alright unquestionably.

Among today's visitors were Messrs Gillespie and Miller who were here on Monday. They wanted a friend of theirs, a Mr. Humbolt, to know me, and I was certainly glad to see all of them, even though it did put a crimp in some gardening I was trying to get finished. They spoke of several interesting books that are to appear in the near future, and mentioned Harper's as scheduled to bring out one or two things of especial interest, but what with momentary distractions, I failed to get the subject matter with which they dealt and either the authors or the titles. I shall give them a buzz tomorrow if I have time, to ask about these points, for I seem to be ever so far behind in my "literary evenings".

I even seem to be a little behind in the daily news, although I do grab off a news flash or two usually before going to sleep.

I hope Sumner Wells pulls through alright, for I have long admired him. I never did understand what happened in the official family when he left the State Department. I believe before F. D. R's death. Did you ever see anything about any differences, or was it the heart condition which culminated in his accident of early this week. Once or twice I have had the good luck to hear him broadcast, and I found his voice as deliciously deep velvet as Paul Robeson's. Once I had hoped he might be put forward as Presidential timber, but in view of what has just happened, this can never be.

I hear some talk of the Sugar Bowl game on Saturday, and one or two of the Henrys will attend, I believe. Having influence, they can get reservations at the Heidelberg Hotel in Baton Rouge for Friday night, and will journey that far on Friday, and thus easily make the 85 miles down the air line to New Orleans on Saturday morning in time for the game. Naturally I declined an invitation. I know a lot better games I should prefer to play at Arenbourg on Friday and Saturday.....

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Eddie Dwyer

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Thursday, December 30th, 1948.

Memorandum:

Clear and cold today, and because of the latter fact, I could tell the purveyors of Tender Leaf Tea something that the dealers in coffee might like better.

Along about first dark, Peter and Little King dropped by for a little chat, and to enjoy the blessings of butane heat, I suppose, for they had been working in the cement walled and floored Pecane Fort, which undoubtedly had chilled them to their marrow.

I chanced to have some fried chicken on hand and a few biscuits, and afterward the three of us had some tea.

They both were fascinated by the prospect, for in the 20 years of their young lives, neither of them had ever seen tea before, let alone tasting it. Of course everyone knows the coffee is the primary beverage of Louisiana but somehow it had never occurred to me that people could possibly spend a third of their lives in an American community without somehow or other bumping into a harmless cup of tea.

It was good to see them roll their eyes in reaction to the novel taste, and when the first cup was finished, I had to exert no persuasion at all to entice them to have a second.

Wouldn't it be interesting to know the proportion of coffees versus tea sold in Louisiana.

Of the enclosures, you will find the three notes coming from Eddie Dwyer, all arriving in the same envelope, unusually dull. He must be some kin to Edith Wyatt Moore, holding letters unmailed in a desk draw "to prove" she has actually written them.

The Parlange card is rather nice, I think. I showed it to "A", and discussed the possibility of identifying Melrose on some types of our stationary by using some kind of a cut of the big house. He liked the idea and has already made inquiry by telephone regarding the possibility. I suggested the Suydam sketch in the front end papers of the Gilmore book be used in whatever form is finally employed. I think it could be rather nice.

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I was glad to learn from Peter tonight that Dee-dee and his boys made it back to Melrose a little before sundown, for Dee-dee, little Robert, Log, Ezta and one or two others had headed out for the Shreveport area early this morning with a big old truck to move Attrice and his family back to Little River from the plantation about a hundred miles to the North of us. I have known of one or two other families who once moved to the same plantation where something mighty close to peonage must be practiced, for some of them had the greatest difficulty in ever getting away from the place, and some of them never did pry themselves loose. It must be hill billies who own the place, and I thought today's move might be fraught with a minor disaster or two. But the truck rolled passed Melrose this evening, heading slap toward Little River, so everyone must have returned intact, and I shall be glad when some of the boys pass this way to tell me of the adventures they experienced, - if any, - in getting away.

Among today's pilgrims were a Mr. and Mrs. Frankenberg and their son, of Fort Worth, who had read Mrs. Lake's short article on Melrose and had accordingly stopped in on their way home from New Orleans. The youth is a senior at Swaneese, which, if memory serves, Will Percy had something to say in his "antennas on the levee". Papa and Mama were pleasant successful middle class people, entranced with the attainments of their son, - an only child, I suspect. For no known reason, sonny insisted on speaking French, and altogether in a manner styled "a la vache espagnole". For the most part, he was telling me about how life was on southern plantations in ante bellum times, which was all very entrancing, even though he obviously knew nothing at all about what he was saying. Papa and Mama didn't know a word of French and while fairly interested in learning something about Melrose, were, nevertheless, quite contented in their pride to let the son do all the orating. It was the most hilarious tour I ever conducted, and while the three of them left, knowing no more about Melrose than before they arrived, still their satisfaction in their son's brilliance is undoubtedly ample recompense for whatever, - if anything, - they may have missed while here.

A post card, mailed at Monroe, La., 100 miles awy, cancelled on the 25th reached me today, and revealed Miss Kate Perkins as a more noble or naive soul than I had suspected. She must have known Sister had refused to come to Melrose for Christmas, for she remarked that she knew she was bound to be lonely, and had accordingly sent her a telegram of sympathy, or some such. I shall remark to Miss Kate in response that I think all the Henrys had a grand Christmas, - the boys enjoying the peace of home and Sister the self pity which she appears to be flaunting to so much self satisfaction. But, Lord, I'm run out already, and it seems as though we were just getting started. I hope a heap of your December 20th snow has completely disappeared and that you are enjoying your little freedom for the moment!....

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Friday, December 31st, 1948.

Memorandum:

I reckon this is the last letter I shall date in 1948, for I am writing later than usual, thanks to unexpected guests, whom I was glad to see, - but not precisely inclined to spend even the short balance of the present declining year with.

Dr. and Mrs. Oberdyke passed me on the road this afternoon about 2:30, as I was returning from gardening at Arenbourg. They had driven down from Shreveport to bring 8 enormous tomes of records of the Land Office, covering grants and patents issued by France and Spain, and registered and confirmed by the Federal Government between 1803 and 1834.

It was certainly most kind of them, but I had planned several other things for the afternoon which could have been so better arranged had I known they were coming, - and going to stay until after 10 o'clock tonight.

We found a flock of Metoyers, of course, and oceans of Prudhommes, and I made quite a few notes of interest. As is always happening in research, however, I stumbled across one little fact, - the name of a plantation, which I had never known before, - that of old Robert McAlpin, the Simon Legree of Uncle Tom's Cabin, situated a few miles below Melrose, on what was described as the West or right bank of Bayou des Cannes. I didn't know before that there was such a bayou, and as the confirmation was in 1813, when the present Cane River was Red River, it is interesting to know there was such a bayou then.

And then it gave the name of the McAlpin plantation, - something which no Louisiana historian has ever mention, and probably has never known. Now Aunt Cammie would have liked to know it, and Ayle would have probably been pleased, too. It was called Hidden or Hidden Hill. To hide a hill in Louisiana, - of all states, would be quite a trick, and that the property should have borne such a title is quite gay, yes, no.

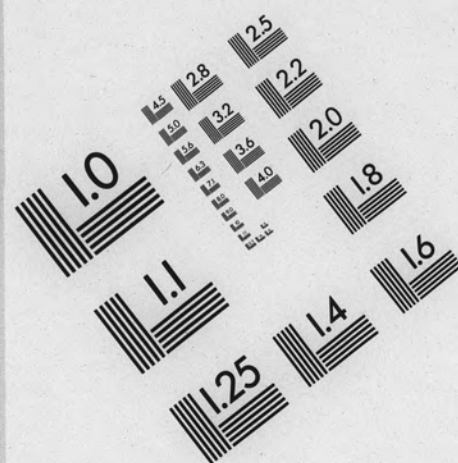
This morning I had a few visitors, white gentry and Little River negroes. In the latter category came Attrice, little Robert Dee-dee, Log and little Robert, - bigger than all the rest. They wanted to tell me about their adventures of yesterday in

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getting away from the hill-billies in the Shreveport area yesterday. It wasn't too exciting, but it was pleasant to hear them recount their experiences.

But before we got to the final departure, Ora Williams, (Mrs. R. B. Williams) came to see me with her 15 year old daughter, Anne. I like Ora ever so much. I left Peter in charge of my "Little River" guests at Yucca, and took my guests to the big house. They remained until dinner time, and during our sitting, Ora read me the splendid article in the December 25th issue of The Saturday Evening Post, which Brad had written, I suppose, shortly before his death. There is a full page illustration of a colored man preaching, facing the article, - if you haven't looked at the magazine as yet. It is a splendid piece, and rather short, and I know you will enjoy it ever so much, if you haven't seen it already. Ora took her copy back to town with her, and I don't happen to have a copy, or I would gladly send it along. Got a laugh today when Frances Henry came to see me to ask if Miss Sally could have some flowers next Thursday to decorate her altar for her private chapel in Magnolia. What was funny about it was the fact that for years I have been sending flowers for just that purpose to Miss Sally by Dr. Knipmayer ever Thursday. It seems that when Frances was at the Hertzogs, Miss Sally asked her if flowers would be available this coming week, - for she got none last week, since Dr. Knipmayer didn't make a round yesterday, what with business having called him to Baton Rouge. And on going to Watchitoches, Frances had asked her husband, Paynie, about it, and he said for her to ask J. H., and J. H. told her he didn't have anything to do about the gardens but to go to me. What a round about business to get something which was already on the docket to be sent. Of course it is just a detail that for the last 50 years Miss Sally has asked for flowers to decorate her altar whenever mass is being said in her chapel, and for 50 years she has had as many servants to cultivate a few flowers of her own as the Madam, but every seems such a puzzle to Miss Sally, even the simple thing of having a harmless garden on her vast Magnolia estate. Sometimes I used to wonder how it was that Magnolia was always coming to Melrose to get a truck load of plants to set out. After all, what with so many lovely flower catalogues tumbling off the press every year, it does seem odd it never occurred to those people to get some of their basic commodities from the same source Melrose did. Perhaps the whole thing seemed pretty futile because they lacked the energy, - which in the present instance, is tantamount to inclination, to bothering with a garden, for I suspect they never yet have dreamed of the fun of seeing if you can plant something and make it grow, and then, if successful, share it with the rest of the world.

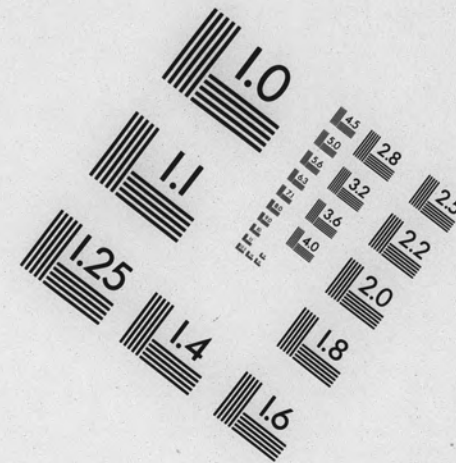
But I'm getting duller and duller, and before I know it, the clock will be striking, and I shall be late in wishing you the happiest of all New Years.....



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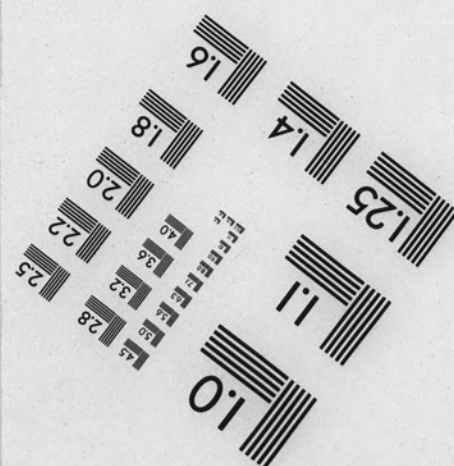
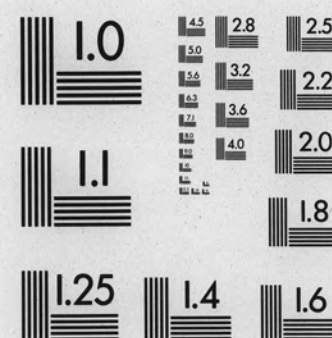
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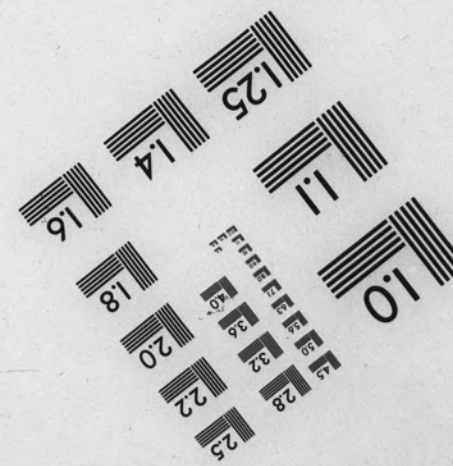
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